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THE MAN-OF-WAR

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"ROMANCE OF REALITY" SERIES

THE MAN-OF-WAR

WHAT SHE HAS DONE, AND WHAT SHE IS DOING

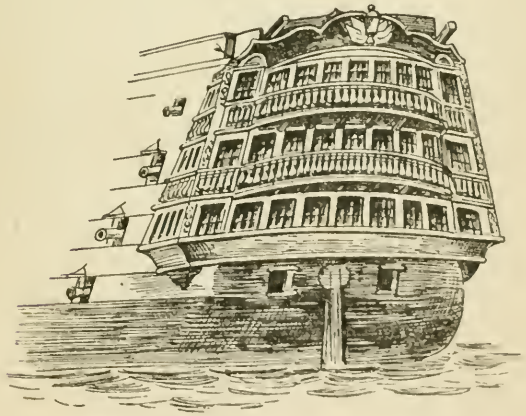
BY

Commander E. HAMILTON CURREY

R.N. (RETIRED)

AUTHOR OF

"SEA WOLVES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN" "WITH MORGAN TO PANAMA"
"THE CAPTAIN OF THE KING'S GUARD" "IAN HARDY, NAVAL CADET"
ETC. ETC.



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FOREWORD

I SHOULD wish here to acknowledge my indebtedness to those whose help I have received in the production of this book. To my friend Mr. Walter Wood, the well-known author, for hints as to the best method of its arrangement, and for placing at my disposal some of the very excellent pictures that are here reproduced, I owe a debt of gratitude that I shall find it difficult to repay. To my brother, Mr. W. F. Currey, I am indebted for the coloured illustration, which is a picture full of interest, representing as it does the carrack in which the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem arrived at Malta, after their expulsion from Rhodes, at the hands of the Turks, in the year 1530. It may be added that this is no fancy picture, no mere dream of the artist's imagination, but an actual copy. The original hangs in the house of a distinguished ecclesiastic in Malta. To Mr. John Murray I tender my thanks for permission to reproduce the pictures of the oar-driven Mediterranean galleys and galeasses; to Messrs. Chambers for permission to reproduce two little-known sea stories, "The French Galleys and English Frigate"

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and "How Pierre le Grand took the Galleon of Spain." Also, I wish to thank the great Elswick firm, Sir W. G. Armstrong Whitworth & Co. Ltd., for the very interesting modern photographs that they have allowed me to reproduce.

E. HAMILTON CURREY,
Commander, Royal Navy, Retired.

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THE MAN-OF-WAR

CHAPTER I

CONCERNING A SAILING PASSAGE

Let us go down to the sea; and when we arrive there it shall not concern us what the weather may be. Perchance we shall look out upon skies of azure and seas of *lapis lazuli*; or it may happen that it will be grey-green, as are the waters of the English Channel and the North Sea; again it is possible that the surface will show itself black and livid, torn and tormented into shapeless masses that are capped with an ugly yellow foam by the breath of the typhoon, the cyclone, or the hurricane, which are, after all, only different names for one and the same thing. All these are different aspects of the same element, which never changes, which never grows old, with which throughout all time man has battled, sometimes victoriously, at others meeting with dire disaster.

And when we have reached the sea, for what is it that we shall seek? We shall seek the man-of-war, the vessel in which mariners have contended for the mastery of the ocean since the beginning of all history: a tale so old that it can never all be told, as men learned to fight long before the time came when the scribe was able to

set down on paper the valiant deeds that they had done.

The men-of-war go by in a stately procession; a pageant full of interest. Everywhere, and at all times, in all the seven seas she has sailed on her mission, but it must not be imagined that always her aim was war. Conflict, it is true, is the end for which she has been built, but particularly may it be said of our own sea service, that more than anything has it served as a force which has enabled all the ships of all the nations in all the seas to do that which is set down in our naval prayer, "to allow them to pass upon the seas on their lawful occasions."

In the days that are past, wild and lawless men have been attracted to the sea in order that by the strong hand, by the plunder of the peaceful trading ships, they might be enabled to live a life of ease and licence on the spoils so easily obtained. And these were not men of any one or specialised nationality; white men and black, brown men and yellow, and men of all the shades that are intermediate have done these things, have proved themselves a scourge to the community, have had to be suppressed with a strong and ruthless hand; and it is by the man-of-war that this task has been accomplished.

And even as the sea is unchanging, so has it happened that the vessels which sail thereon have preserved very much the same shape and form until quite recent years. It is true that steam as a method for the propulsion of ships dates back more than a hundred years; all the same, it took many years for steam to be recognised as indispensable to the sailor, who because he is perhaps more addicted to the ways of his grandfathers and great-

grandfathers than any other type of man, treated this "newfangled idea" with scorn. He had to admit, because he could not deny the evidence of his own senses, that under the influence of the steam engine a ship could now progress directly in the way from which the wind was blowing; that was a fact from which he could not get away. But this did not dismay him in the least; his comment on the situation was that of course it was all right until your engines broke down; then, he demanded in triumph, where were you? For a long time the engineers provided no answer to this question; you did break down, and when you did you made sail and fetched your port under canvas, while the ancient shellback who was described in far back days in the navy as "every hair a ropeyarn, every finger a fish-hook, and his blood Stock'ollum (Stockholm) tar," snorted in derision and said hurtful and nasty things to the men responsible for the engines.

That things went the other way more frequently, that the masts and sails helped out the engines far less often than the engines got masts and sails out of a mess, counted for nothing in the estimation of these fine old conservatives of the sea. They had been brought up to *sail* a ship; not to progress through the ocean in a condemned tea-kettle, liable to blow up at any moment of the day or night.

There is an old story dating back as far as the Crimean war concerning a captain who came into Balaklava harbour. The land was high and in consequence the wind was baffling, and in spite of every trick known to the seaman in handling his ship under sail, this particular vessel fell across the bows of another which

was at anchor. Then and only then did there come a hail, which said, "Why didn't you go astern with your engines?" A new light seemed to break in on the mariner in fault, slowly understanding came to him, then he smote his hand down on the rail in front of him, ejaculating as he did so, "I forgot I was a steamer."

The British Admiralty, not only in the earliest days of steam—when it must be admitted that breakdowns were frequent—but for years and years afterwards, regarded steam, and all that was connected with it, with the greatest suspicion and dislike. They were of opinion that it would ruin our breed of sailors, and further that it introduced an element of expense into naval affairs that the country would never stand. Therefore orders were issued that as little coal as possible was to be burned; all passages to be made under sail as far as possible; and to this ruling all His Majesty's ships conformed until quite recent years. It is also, comparatively speaking, only the other day that the training of both officers and men ceased to be that of the old time, and quite young men in the navy to-day, of not more than twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age, were brought up with the knowledge of how to manage a ship under sail, and with all the particular instruction which goes to make a man efficient in that art.

And now that all this has gone by the board, when the old-time seamanship is as extinct as the Dodo, there are still persons who contend that you will never make a real seaman without it, and that some day we shall return to the old teaching as a preliminary to modern requirements of the sea.

Concerning a Sailing Passage

We are dealing in this book with the man-of-war, but there is something even more important than any ship, and that is the men who sail beneath the shadow of her flag; and it is extraordinary when the seaman looks back and considers the times as they are now, and the times as they were forty or fifty years ago, how the account, as far as the man and the officer are concerned, seems to balance between the old time and the new. The present-day sailor is better fed and better housed than was his predecessor; but his life is duller and he sees less of the foreign countries; as nowadays for certain reasons the navy of our country is concentrated around our own shores, whereas aforetime it was, in bulk, in the far distant waters of the world. The modern sailor does not have to turn up twenty times in a watch which lasts four hours, in the middle of the night, to trim sails; neither does he have to go aloft in a howling tempest to reef or furl; all that side of the seaman's life is dead and gone. But as he does not know the pains of the sailing ship, neither, on the other hand, does he know its pleasures. Not for him is the cruise down the heart of the trades or in front of the monsoon, in the fashion that it was known aforetime to his predecessor. Those long days when the stately, well-trimmed ship, a pile of towering canvas, sailed on and on day after lovely day. When the stainless blue vault of heaven met the azure of the sea on the far horizon; when day and night the strong sweet breath of the never-varying wind bore her onwards and ever onwards, while all on board luxuriated in the most perfect type of perfect weather that the world has to show. There was no work to do, for the wind was doing all that was necessary; there was no dust,

there was no smell, there was no noise. When the red sun dipped, a gallant silver moon soared overhead in his place, and all the sails were silvern and all the shadows black as ink. At such a time even a middle watch, which happens between midnight and four in the morning, was a pleasure; there would be no going aloft to reef topsails, of that you were assured; and if you were a midshipman, you dozed in a surreptitious manner on the side tackle of a gun, with one eye open in case you were wanted.

On one cruise such as this it was demonstrated beyond a doubt that the midshipmen were not born to be drowned—they were evidently reserved for a drier fate! It happened that the ship was fitted with what was known as "a lifting screw," which meant that the propeller could be uncoupled from the shaft if necessary, and by means of a tackle rove through blocks attached to what was known as a "banjo frame," it could be hoisted on deck. The midshipmen had orders to have their baths on the upper deck behind a screen stretched across abaft the mizzen mast. One morning one of the young gentlemen discovered that he could squeeze himself past the boss of the screw propeller, and in this manner get into the screw well, the aperture in which the screw travelled up and down vertically. Inside the well were rungs clamped to its vertical side, and down these the midshipman went until he stood with his feet just clear of the water. The ship was sailing ten knots an hour, and beneath him as she lifted to the slight following swell, the small portion of the Indian Ocean that he could see boiled and bubbled. Above him curious eyes peered down through the aperture, and a

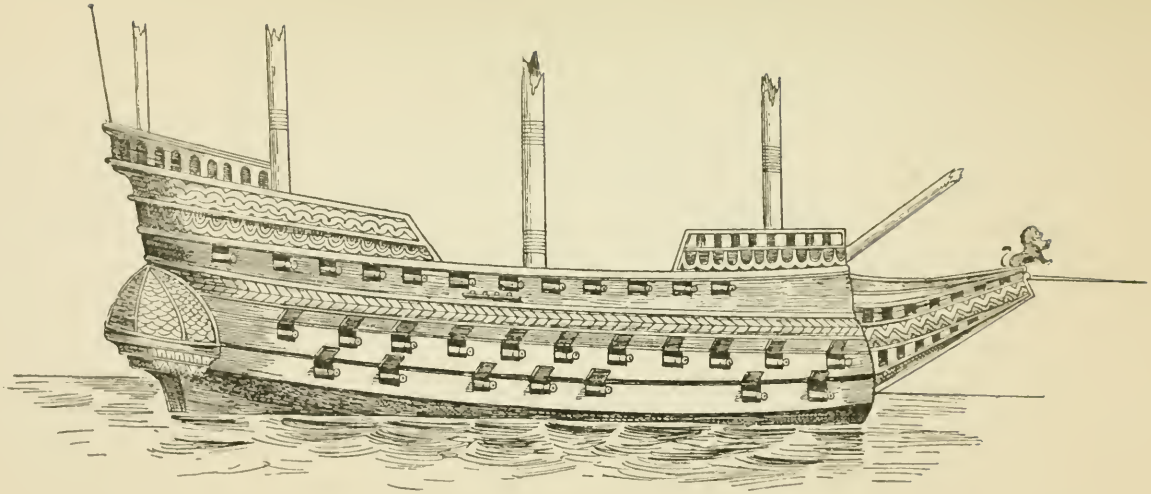
voice hailed him to know what it was like. To this he replied that it was all right; at the same time wondering if he went any lower down if he would be torn from his hold and drowned. Again the voices from the outer air made themselves heard; they shouted opprobrium, they asked if he were afraid to go any lower, they informed him that so far he had not had the courage to wet his feet.

If the midshipman in the screw well had told the exact truth at this moment he would have replied that seldom had he been more frightened; all the same, he was more concerned as to what would be said to him if he came up his precarious ladder without going to the very bottom rung of all; so he went down another step. This time the sea boiled and swirled around him as high as his waist, and he discovered, much to his surprise, that there seemed to be no particular drag on him: so he went down yet another rung. The water rose to his shoulders. Then taking his courage—as well as the bottom and last rung—in both hands, he lowered himself down and waited. For all he knew he might be torn from his hold, dashed against the stern post, and drowned; but none of these direful things happened. The stern of the ship rose, and he was left hanging with only his toes in the water; then as the stern sank again he held on like grim death and waited for what was about to happen. She went down, down, down, over his head, over his clinging hands, and the water all around him bubbled and danced as if he were immersed in a gigantic bottle of soda water; the sea was cool and pleasant, but all the same it seemed rather a long time to him until she lifted again and he saw the dark wooden

side of the screw well. Then he heard the voices from above again, demanding what it was like. To which he replied that it was simply ripping; whereupon he was adjured with contumelious adjectives to come up out of that and make room for his betters.

He came up dripping and grinning, inwardly proud of himself that it was he who had been the first to dare this great adventure. Then one by one other slim pink forms insinuated themselves into the well and tested this new and glorious form of bathing; and for the remainder of that cruise, as long as the screw was up, it was in this manner that the midshipmen enjoyed their baths; and it is needless to say that the manner in which their morning ablutions were taken, was strictly concealed from their superior officers.

The ship was homeward bound after a commission on the China station. The little enclosed ports and the mighty rushing rivers; the huddled, queer-looking houses, with their queer-twisted roofs and pig-tailed inhabitants, seemed very far away now, as the midshipmen looked back and remembered. They had had a grand send off from Hong Kong with the Chinese bumboatmen firing royal salutes from funny little guns mounted in the bumboat, while the crews of the other men-of-war, and the merchant seamen too, had crowded the rigging of their ships and cheered them to the echo as they steamed out through the Lye-eemoon Pass. South to Singapore they had come, and then south again through the swirling muddy currents that race through the dangerous waters that lie between Banca and Sumatra; where the tigers come down to the sea beach — apparently to hunt for crabs!—where the



A British Ship of War in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth.

vampire bats fly in flocks from island to island, and where the air is heavy with the smell of spices. So they had fared on through Java Sea to Batavia, that neat Dutch settlement, which next to Singapore itself is the great meeting-place of all the queer folk who inhabit Borneo, Celebes, Sumatra, and that tangle of islands which lie between Formosa and Northern Australia.

Then they had steamed through the Straits of Sunda out into the Indian Ocean, and it had seemed to them that then had the real homeward-bound voyage begun. They had done with the East at last, with its yellow people, its queer sights, and still queerer smells ; and best of all, they had done with the engines for quite a long time ; for in those days the seaman still clung to his old-time ideas, to the cult of the mast and yard and sail.

Those who do not know the sea, or those whose experience of it is confined perhaps to one particular crossing of its waters, are apt to think of it as all very much the same, as a vast expanse in which monotony reigns supreme. But in this they are mistaken, for the ocean is infinite in the variations that it can show. Here, for instance, in the Indian ocean, in this voyage with which we are for the moment concerned, sailing deep in the heart of the south-east trade wind, the sea was full of life. As the ship's great forefoot rose and fell, crashing through the blue water and leaving behind her a wake white as milk, there rose on either side of her bows coveys of flying-fish that skimmed from wave top to wave top at a most amazing speed, exactly in the same manner as you will see on shore a covey of partridges flushed from among the turnips. Then again

at times they might be seen flying in front of some enemy of the deep, in such a hurry as not to notice particularly where they were going: and on these occasions it was by no means infrequent that, either not seeing the ship, or perhaps attempting to take her in their stride as they went, they would fly in through an open port, or perchance even land with a mighty flop on the upper deck. When they did this there was a rush to secure the prize, as fresh fish is the last thing that the bluewater sailor ever secures for his dinner.

It cannot be said, however, that the flying-fish, the albacore, the bonita, the dolphin, or any of the fish that can be caught in warm-water latitudes, are much value for the table; nature, it appears, has ordained that a fish to be fit to eat must live in northern waters, and, if you want good fish, even the Mediterranean is too far south to provide you with those that are really palatable. But if in the Indian ocean the fish is not much value when you can secure him, he still is good enough to provide you with a considerable amount of sport in the catching. With the permission of the first lieutenant the midshipmen on the voyage of which we speak had a good deal of fun out of attempting to beguile the inhabitants of the deep. The fish that they turned their attention to was the dolphin; and it must be explained that what the sailor calls a dolphin is not what the scientific naturalist calls by that name. However, this is all the same to the mariner; from time immemorial he has called a certain fish a dolphin, and he has done and will continue so to do until the end of time; for, as has been before explained, it takes something little short of an earthquake to move those who go down to the sea in ships from the

notions that they have derived from their tarpaulin ancestors!

What the sailor calls a dolphin is a very beautiful fish, slim and graceful in shape, and when he can find a ship sailing in his neighbourhood, nothing apparently gives him so much delight as to play continuously around her bows; darting from one side to another; now going ahead for a few yards, anon dropping astern for a space, but keeping all the while quite close in to the oncoming cutwater. The midshipmen went to the boatswain, a veteran seaman for whom they had deepest respect, and upon whom nevertheless they occasionally played tricks, and begged from him a grain wherewith to secure the elusive dolphin. A grain is a sort of harpoon; it has three barbed prongs running in a line one way, and two at right angles the other, so that it forms a cross. Into a socket above this cross is fitted an ash staff, which is weighted with lead at the upper end, and it is secured inboard by a light line to which it is made fast. The method of using it is for the operator to have a belt around his waist which will enable him to lean well out so as to clear the side of the ship. Standing with feet strongly braced and supported by the belt, the grain is held half-way down the shaft with the left hand, while the right rests on the weighted leaden top. The sportsman has to wait until the fish swims directly underneath, and at the opportune moment directs his weapon downwards with all his force; then, if his aim be good—and it may be remarked that it is hardly so once in a hundred times—he will drive the prongs of his weapon through the fish, which will be secured in this manner.

The difficulty is the fish; the way in which the most

enticing dolphin will swim for hours just out of reach, is really most annoying. He is in a position in which he is perfectly safe, as it is no good darting the heavy grain sideways. One thing must be conceded to the dolphin when you have caught him ; and that is that he turns every colour of the rainbow before he dies ; this is not one of those sea legends that have been invented by the unveracious mariner for the delectation of the landsman. They caught very few dolphins, but they got a few, some in the manner described, some caught with a hook baited with red bunting trailing astern from one of the quarter boats. Of course there were also porpoises, but your porpoise, although fond of gambolling around a ship, always keeps at a respectful distance, and has no liking for being grained. The whale also of the Indian Ocean is metaphorically a shy bird ; far on the blue horizon he could be discerned blowing into the air jewelled streams of water which formed rainbows, but although he might come within rifle shot he would approach no nearer ; he had reminiscences perchance of South Sea whalers by whom he was sadly harried. It was different with the sharks, for the shark is always hungry, and anything from a dead bullock to a discarded kerosene tin comes gratefully to his maw.

The shark is the sailor's most deadly foe ; so one evening when the wind had taken off a little, and the ship was sailing not quite so fast in consequence, and a fine specimen cruised hungrily under the lee quarter, the midshipmen put up a petition that they might be allowed to try and catch this sea tiger. The first lieutenant was agreeable, and a shark hook was bent on to a stout rope, baited with a four-pound piece of ship's pork and towed

enticingly in front of his nose. For a time it appeared that he was suspicious; he smelt it and dallied with it, while the midshipmen, almost crazy with excitement, hung so far over the rail that they were in danger of falling into his jaws. At last he made up his mind that this was a thing too good to be missed; there was a swirl in the water as he turned, there was a flash in the evening sunlight as his white belly turned uppermost—for the shark is so overhung that he must turn on his back to seize his prey—and the next moment they had him fast.

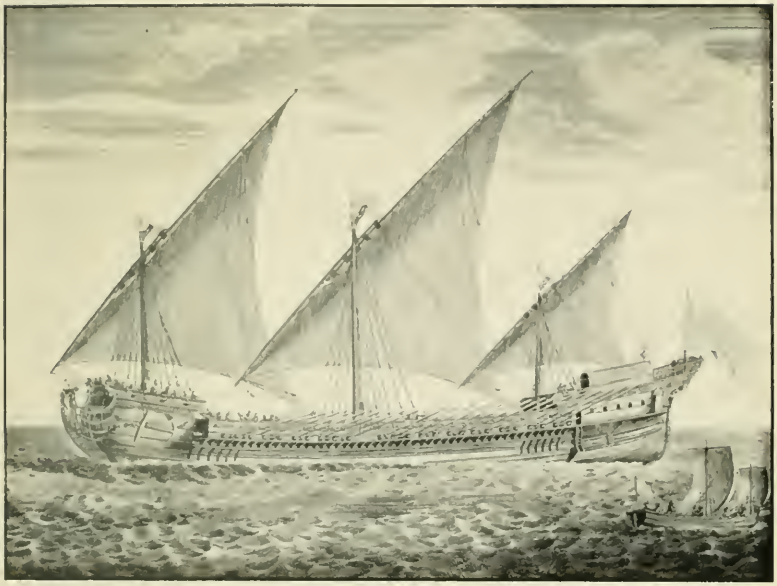
Then there was no ceremony; the watch tailed on to the rope from which the hook—and now the shark—depended, and he was run up to the block through which the rope was rove and hung suspended. Then an able seaman got a running bowline around his tail, and a moment or so after he was sprawling and lashing out with his tail on the deck. Shouts went up for "Chippy" to bring his axe, and the carpenter appearing put an end to his gyrations by cutting through the spine close to the tail. When he was opened up there was found the whole of a turkey that had gone bad and had been thrown overboard, and a miscellaneous collection of oddments, including several of the gunroom sardine tins. How a shark digests sardine tins must be left to the naturalist to decide.

And then one morning on the far horizon there appeared feathery umbrella-shaped things, which, as they rose on straight slim stems, determined themselves into palm trees; and some few hours afterwards the best bower anchor crashed down into the coral trash and silver sand which forms the bottom of Mahé Harbour in the Seychelle Islands.

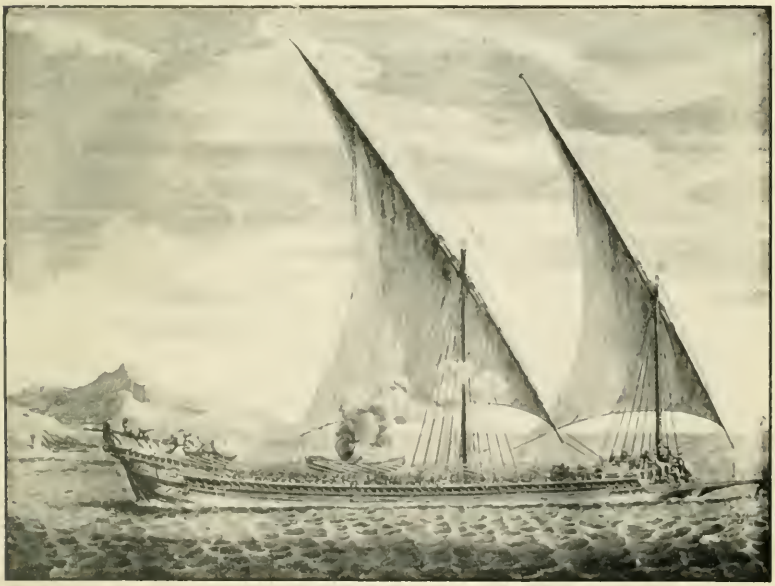
Here the midshipmen went ashore and wandered among the palm groves by the side of a little lovely river that ran clear as crystal over its bed of silver sand to the sea. They bought stores of the coco-de-mer, the double coconut that alone grows in these favoured isles. The coco-de-mer got its name in old days when it was washed up on the shores of India—having made an independent voyage across the ocean. Those persons who found it made up their minds that it grew somehow in the sea, as no man had ever before seen a double coconut; and they called it accordingly the coconut of the sea.

Also the midshipmen went on board the whalers at anchor at Mahé and bought from those solitary seamen who spent their lives in pursuit of the biggest of sea animals, whales teeth curiously carved and fashioned. But, as the boatswain said, "the girls at home had got hold of the towrope," and they dallied but a short time beneath the shade of the coco-de-mer trees. Once more the capstan spun round, the anchor came to the bows, and due north for Guardafui did the ship take her course.

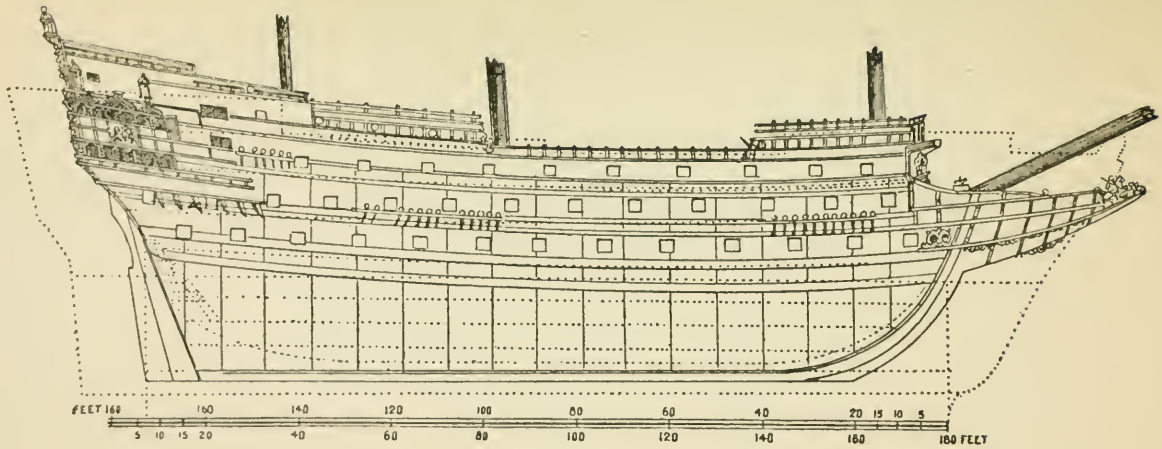
And now what a change came in the sea conditions! No longer was peace and comfort the lot of those voyagers; as for the soft embraces of the south-east trade wind they exchanged the blustering rigour of the south-west monsoon. Worst of all for those who had had their blood thinned by three years practically continuous service in the tropics, the thermometer dropped until they exchanged their white uniforms for blue and shivered in the unaccustomed cold. It blew a whole gale, and although the good ship was running



A GALEASSE UNDER SAIL, 16TH CENTURY.



GALLEY UNDER SAIL FLYING THE STANDARD OF THE CHIEF OF THE SQUADRON.



Sheer Plan of the *Royal Sovereign*, built in 1637.

in front of it, she had to snug down and reef until she was prepared for the raving squalls that swept up from the southward. Monstrously in a monstrous sea did she labour; at one time with her stern cocked so high in the air that it seemed as if she would overbalance in that direction, and the next shift of the sea would cause her to lie flat along on her side, while the hungry green water sloshed on board at bow and stern. The midshipman of the watch, when not aloft taking in a fresh reef, slid miserably about the sloping decks, his sea boots full of water, his oilskins indignantly refusing to keep out tons of the Indian Ocean that fell over the high bulwarks on to his head.

In this fashion did they stagger northwards; their one consolation being that it blew so hard that, at any rate, it blew them along in the direction in which they wished to go. Then one day the wind dropped to a light breeze, for they were nearing that cape which the Arabs, the pioneer seamen of these waters, have named "the cape of the wind's death." Then Guardafui hove in sight, came abeam, and there was a flat calm. They furled their soaking sails and once again steam was raised. They turned to the westward into the Gulf of Aden, and in one short hour the thermometer ran up from 68° Fahrenheit to 104°. For the wind which comes across the Somaliland desert in summer is as a breath from the nethermost pit, superheated as it is by hundreds of leagues of unrelieved desert sand.

Then they changed their clothes once more and sat down and wished that they were dead. There was no long tarrying at Aden, which in the summer time is not

a place in which to linger. All around them the black fish, which are a sort of second-class whale, rolled and wallowed in the oily calm that prevailed as they steamed out of Aden Roads and steered for Bab-el-Mandeb; but no one had the energy to make any demonstration against them, or even the seventeen-foot-long sharks that haunt the Strait that has again been aptly named by the Arabs as "the gate of tears." The Red Sea shut down upon them in choking clammy heat until they reached the Gulf of Suez, where a special hand got at those bellows which send the north wind down that narrow gully with most surprising force. On either side gaunt wrecks marked the passage, ships with their bottoms beaten out of them by the knife-edged ledges of rock. She stood first on her head and then on her tail, she made two knots and a half per hour; until the boatswain gloomily opined that all the young women at home must have let go the towrope. However, in the end Suez was reached and a voluble French pilot took her in charge. It was in the early days of the Canal, and ships had to tie up to the bank at night and listen to the jackals howling in the desert; but they got through without sticking, which was by no means an unusual occurrence to take place then, and won their way clear into the Mediterranean. Then came Malta, the Rock of Gibraltar, and all those old seamarks of the oft-sailed road, that are so familiar to seamen of all nations; and at last they found themselves for the first time in nearly four years once again on the broad bosom of the Atlantic.

And then at last came that day of all days, when they ran the anchor to the bows for the last time that commission at Spithead; with a Portsmouth pilot in charge, and

with a paying-off pendant so long that the gilded bladder at its end danced along Southsea beach, and was chased by small boys as they passed the Castle and the Pier, they fared into Portsmouth Harbour, tied her up alongside the Dockyard, and were at rest. Then three weeks later she paid off, and the midshipmen, laden with cocos-de-mer, monkeys, and parrot cages, sought the railway station, bidding one another boisterous farewells, and wondering which would be their next ship, and considering that, after all, they might do quite a lot worse than try the good old China station once again.

CHAPTER II

A NAVY OF OARS—MOSLEM PIRATES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

If we search through the records of the past we find that the man-of-war has usually been propelled through the water by her sails. Nevertheless there was a period, and a most interesting one, in which her motive-power was provided by oars rowed by men who formed part of the crew. The vessels which used this means of proceeding from port to port were in their heyday in the Mediterranean Sea in the sixteenth century. By this we do not mean to say that with the date 1600 the oar-propelled vessels ceased to be used as men-of-war, but that this was the period during which they performed their most important work; also in which two battles which live in history, and about which we shall have something to say presently, took place. The reason why the galley and the galeasse—by which name the rowing men-of-war were known—were more common in the sixteenth century than in those by which it was succeeded, was not alone the fact that the development of the sailing vessel and the improvement of artillery rendered her comparatively weak and unimportant as a fighting ship; but also owing to the peculiar conditions that obtained in the Mediterranean between 1500 and

1600. It is a self-evident fact that if you are to have a vessel that is to be propelled by oars it is necessary to have someone to row. The rowing of the galley was almost entirely confined to slaves, as the toil was so terrific and the conditions of life for the rowers so miserable, that no free men could be found to undertake the task.

In consequence the toilers at the oar were either enemies captured in battle or else criminals of the most degraded type, who were "condemned to the galleys." From those far-distant days has come down to us the saying "to work like a galley slave," which we all know means to toil to the very utmost limit of our powers, or perchance to break down under the strain. The sixteenth century was pre-eminently the century of the warrior; kings and emperors, princes and governors, all those who held rule and governance over their fellow-men, were first, last, and all the time fighting men devoured with ambition, entirely reckless of the price to be paid in human life and human suffering. Also in the Mediterranean these warriors were divided roughly into two opposing camps; one was that of the Christians, the other that of the Mohammedans.

Throughout the length and breadth of this sea, conflict was practically unending, and one of its prime objects was to secure from the opposing side men who could be chained to the rower's bench. Thus if the galley were one belonging to the Moslems, the slaves who rowed were Christians; if she flew the flag of a Christian Power, those unfortunates who tugged at the oars were followers of the Prophet Mohamet. The galley was a vessel that was long, narrow, and of extremely low freeboard and small depth of hold. One of

these vessels, to give a fairly typical average example, was of a length of 125 feet between perpendiculars, and 180 feet over all, taking in the poop and the prow. She would have a beam (or breadth) of 19 feet and a depth of hold of 7 feet 6 inches. At this period a sailing vessel of the same length would have had a beam of 40 feet and an extremely high free-board (as contemporary pictures show), with the result that she was a ridiculously slow sailer, and almost incapable of progressing in any direction save in front of the wind.

In the language of the day they were known respectively as the "long ship" and the "round ship," which names described them pretty accurately. So distinct, however, were the two types of vessel—that is to say, the galley and the sailing ship—that the nautical terminology, or names of different parts of the ship, differed entirely the one from the other. By this is meant that the words used to denote masts, sails, rudders, tillers, bow, stern, etc., were different. Perhaps to bring before the reader vividly what a galley really looked like, we may quote the words of Barras de la Penne, a French officer, who in the year 1713 first went on board one of these craft; this is what he says:

"Those who see a galley for the first time are astonished to see so many persons; there are an infinite number of villages in Europe which do not contain an equal number of inhabitants; however, this is not the principal cause of one's surprise, but that so many men can be assembled in so small a space. It is truth that many of them have not room to sleep at full length, for they put seven men on one bench; that is to say, on a space about ten feet long and four broad.

"At the bows one sees some thirty sailors who have for their lodging the floor space of the rambades (this is the platform in the prow of the galley), which consists of a rectangular space ten feet long by eight in width. The captain and officers, who live on the poop, are scarcely better lodged, and one is tempted to compare their grandeur with that of Diogenes in his tub. When the unpitying Libyan Sea surprises these galleys upon the Roman coasts, when the Norther lashes to foam the Gulf of Lyons, when the humid east wind of Syria is driving them offshore, everything combines to make life on board a modern galley a hell of misery and discomfort. The creaking of the blocks and cordage, the loud cries of the sailors, the horrible maledictions of the galley slaves, the groaning of the timbers, mingled with the clank of chains and the bellowing of the tempest, produce sentiments of affright in the most intrepid breasts. The rain, the hail, the lightning, habitual accompaniments of these terrific storms, the waves which dash over the vessel, all add to the horror of the situation, and although devotion is not as a rule very strongly marked on board a galley, you will hear these folk praying to God, and others making vows to the saints; these would do much better not to forget God and His saints when the danger is past.

"Calm itself has its inconveniences, as the evil smells which arise from the galley are then so strong that one cannot get away from them in spite of the tobacco with which one is obliged to plug one's nostrils from morning till night."

There are further details given by Barras de la Penne, into which it is impossible to enter; his case is complete

without further words. We can supplement his account, however, with that of Jean Marteille de Bergerac, who was an actual galley slave himself. He was "condemned to serve on board the galleys in 1707, in his quality of Protestant"—which seems rather hard upon him—and his description of the life of a "forçat" or galley slave is as follows:

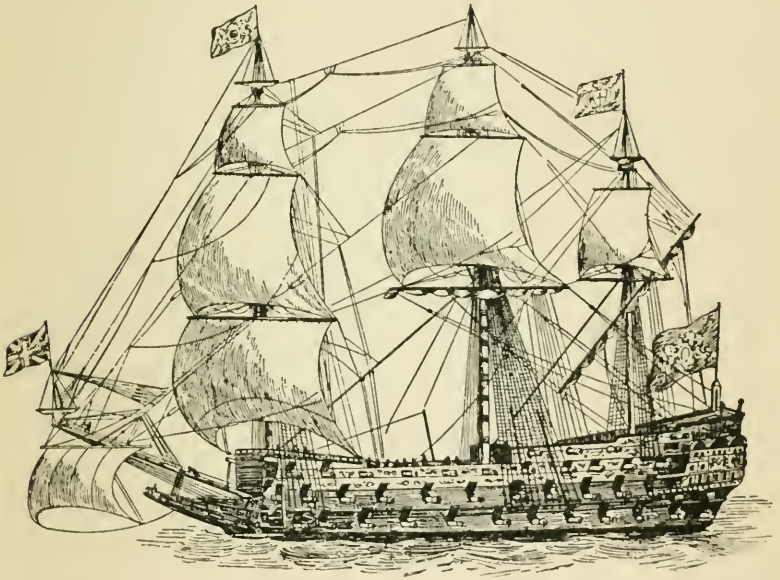
"They are chained six to a bench; the benches are four feet wide covered with sacking stuffed with wool, over which are thrown sheepskins which reach to the floor. The officer who is master of the galley slaves remains aft with the captain to receive his orders; there are two under officers,—one amidships and one at the prow; all of these are armed with whips, with which they flog the absolutely naked bodies of the slaves. When the captain gives the order to row, the officer gives the signal with a silver whistle which hangs on a cord round his neck; the signal is repeated by the under officers, and very soon all the fifty oars strike the water as one. Imagine six men chained to a bench as naked as they were born, one foot on the stretcher, the other raised and placed on the bench in front of them, holding in their hands an oar of enormous weight, stretching their bodies towards the after part of the galley with arms extended to push the loom (or handle) of the oar clear of the backs of those in front of them, who are in the same attitude. They plunge the blades of the oars into the water and throw themselves back, falling on to the seat, which bends beneath their weight. Sometimes the galley slaves row their ten, twelve, or even twenty hours at a stretch, without the slightest relapse or rest, and on these occasions the officer will go round putting

A "BRIGANTINE" CHASING A FELUCCA—THE MOMENT BEFORE BOARDING.

Note.—The term "Brigantine" was generic for small craft, not "galleys," or "galeasses" in 16th and 17th century in the Mediterranean.

ENTERPRIZE, FIRST STEAM VESSEL TO ROUND THE CAPE UNDER COMMAND OF LIEUTENANT JOHNSTONE, R.N., ENTERING MADRAS ROADS.

into the mouths of the wretched rowers pieces of bread soaked in wine to prevent them from fainting. Then the captain will call upon the officers to redouble their blows, and if one of the slaves falls fainting on his oar, which is a common occurrence, he is flogged until he appears to be dead, and is then flung overboard without ceremony."



The *Royal Sovereign*, built in 1637. From a painting by Vandervelde.

There is really very little to add to this terrible and realistic picture drawn by one who actually underwent and survived this treatment for the crime of being a Protestant. There were times, of course, when the galley slave was at rest, as these vessels were fitted with two, and sometimes three masts, and if the wind were favourable it was naturally taken advantage of by those

in command. There is a good deal of misapprehension concerning the speed at which a galley could travel. She is frequently spoken of as abnormally swift; but this was far from being the case. No doubt some of them, owing to their fine lines and narrow beam, were swift sailers, but when one of these craft started with her "gallerians" quite fresh, all that could be got out of her in a flat calm was some four and a half knots for the first hour; this dropped probably to three or three and a half during the second hour; and after that, let the boatswains flog never so mercilessly, she progressed at an average of about two and a half. The advantage that she possessed over the sailing ship was the same (only in an infinitely lesser degree) as that possessed by the steamship; that is to say, she could be moved against the wind, or she could be navigated in perfectly windless weather. It was this that rendered her so formidable in the Mediterranean. During the winter months she lay up in harbour, as the sixteenth century mariner, like a sensible man, had no affection for gales and storms. But when the spring came, when "winter's rains and ruins were over," then did the longships fit out once more and put to sea seeking the enemy; or, perchance, merely seeking their prey.

This was the period in which piracy as a profession was practised on the grand scale; and the leaders of the Moslem corsairs, such men as Uruj Barbarossa and Kheyr-ed-Din Barbarossa (who were brothers), or Dragut Reis and Occhiali, or Ali Basha, commanded forces of great size and strength, and were actually makers of history at the time in which they flourished. Kheyr-ed-Din Barbarossa was certainly the greatest pirate that the

world has ever seen. From nothing at all—going to sea in a small vessel seeking for what he could steal from luckless Christian merchant ships—he rose to be King of Algiers and Tunis, and Admiralissimo to the Sultan of Turkey, known as Soliman the Magnificent—the really great ruler who then sat on the throne of the Ottoman Empire. Personal force, consisting of a greater and more indomitable courage than those desperate characters who followed his fortunes, was his; and allied to this was an intellect which never faltered and seldom blundered; a character so marvellous that it never failed to make its mark upon those with whom he was associated, whether that person was Soliman himself or the rudest swordsman who followed his fortune in the corsair flotilla that he commanded. His history is one of the greatest romances that the world has ever seen; for, villain as he undoubtedly was, he surmounted all obstacles, and in all the happenings of his unusually prolonged life—for he died in his bed when over ninety years of age—no reverse of fortune ever found him unprepared. Time and again circumstances arose which, with ninety-nine men out of a hundred, would have spelt irremediable ruin; but ever and always the greatest of the corsairs rose superior to disaster and, collecting new forces, continued his devastating career as one of the most dangerous foes that Christendom had ever known.

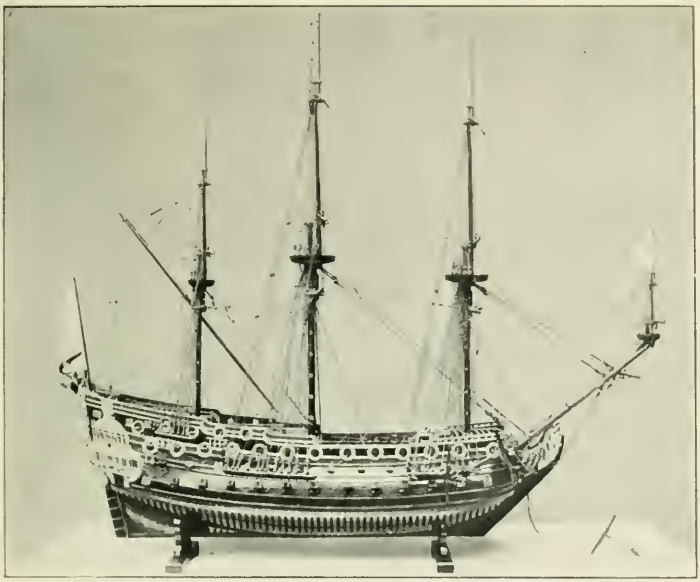
That in which he was absolutely supreme was his craft as a seaman; on shore in his capacity as a King of Algiers and Tunis his setbacks and defeats were many and disastrous; but let Kheyr-ed-Din once set his foot on board of his war-worn galley, then he proved his

superiority to all and sundry. When Ibrahim, the Grand Vizier of Soliman the Magnificent, was ordered by his master to find someone to command the Turkish forces at sea, it was to Barbarossa he turned; he disregarded the murmurs of the Bashas in Constantinople against "the pirate," and told the Sultan that he had set his hand "on a veritable man of the sea."

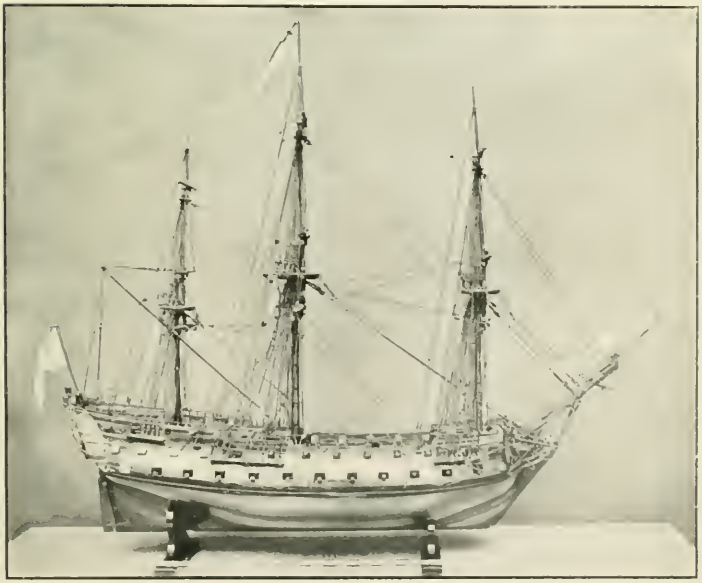
Ranged against him on the side of the Christians was that notable admiral of the Emperor Charles v., Andrea Doria. All the strength of the most powerful empire in Europe was set in battle array against the corsair king; and yet, when at last these two lifelong enemies met at the battle of Prevesa, in September 1538, it was the Christian Admiral who fled from the encounter, although he had 200 ships to the 122 that his great adversary could muster.

We cannot, however, linger over the career of Kheyr-ed-Din Barbarossa (which has been treated at length by the writer in his book, *Sea Wolves of the Mediterranean*), but must pass on to his successor as a pirate leader in the tideless sea, Dragut Reis. This man, if the inferior of Kheyr-ed-Din as a leader, was inferior only to him, as he also was not only a born seaman, but also a born leader of men. We will here treat of one incident in his career as illustrative of what the galley could do when she was in the hands of one who really understood her capabilities.

Dragut, in the year 1548, was carrying out his piratical business, and had captured from the Spaniards the towns of Susa, Sfax, Monastir, and, strongest of them all, one known as "Africa," the other name of which was Mehedia, on the coast of Tunis. At this



MODEL OF *ROYAL CHARLES*, 17TH CENTURY.



MODEL OF 64-GUN SHIP ABOUT 1750.

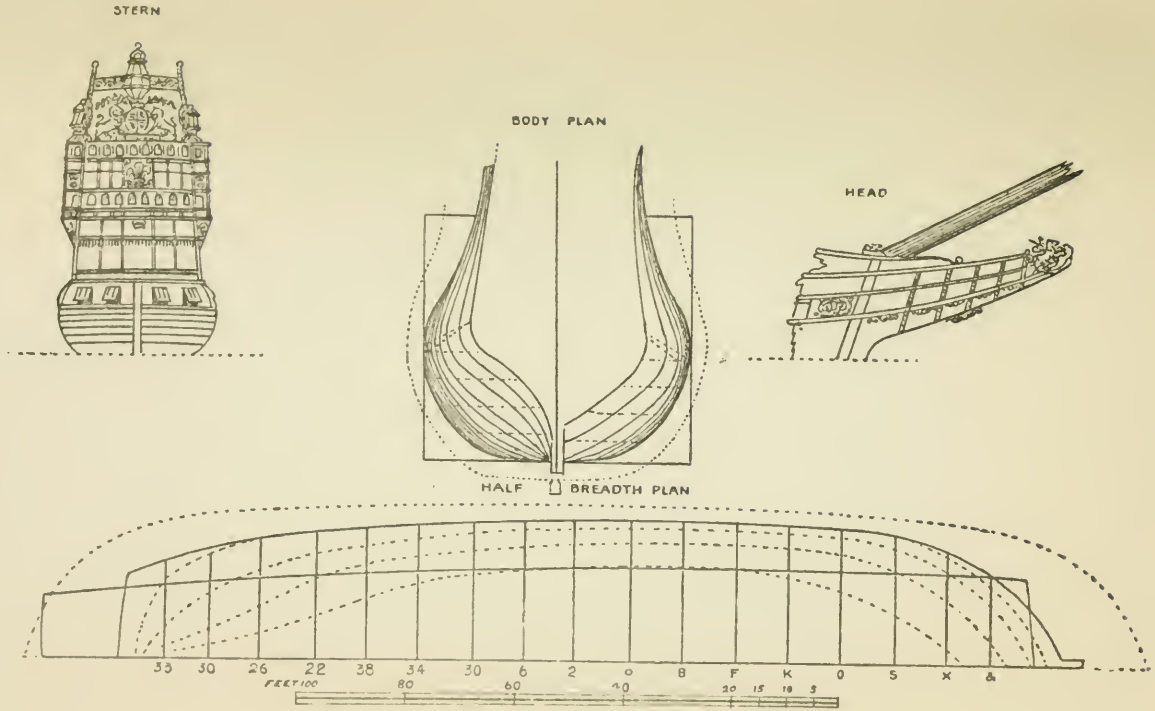
time the Emperor Charles v. was in the very height of his fame and his power; and the idea that a pirate should capture *his* property, that the sea rover should man the rowing benches of his galleys with subjects of the greatest Empire then in the world, was a matter that called for the promptest punishment. Accordingly the great Genoese seaman, Andrea Doria, who served the Emperor as head of his navy, was ordered to put to sea and to fight against neither small nor great until he had accomplished the destruction of Dragut, who was to be taken dead or alive.

The corsair had repaired to a harbour in the island of Jerbah, off the coast of Tunis, known as "la Bocca de Cantara," there to repose himself after his late strenuous exertions. He was unaware that the Emperor had put Doria on his track; and it was only when the Genoese admiral appeared and anchored with twenty-two royal galleys in the mouth of the harbour, thus completely cutting off his retreat, that the Moslem leader became aware of his danger. But "one Dragut, a corsair odious to both God and man"—as he had been described by the Emperor—was not only as brave and fierce as a lion, he was also as slippery as an eel. He was in no case to fight Doria at sea, by trying to force his way out of the harbour, as he had neither ships nor men enough present to attempt this with any chance of success. As a preliminary measure he disembarked guns from his galleys, mounted them at the mouth of the harbour, and began a brisk cannonade on the fleet of his adversary. At this Doria merely smiled and withdrew his galleys out of range. He had no intention of fighting; he did not intend to lose a man; sooner or later, when starvation

had done its work, the pirates must surrender. He sent off to Sicily and Naples for reinforcements, and at the same time dispatched letters saying, "The fox is trapped." This news, we are told, "rejoiced all Christendom, and most powerful succours came daily flocking to the sea-ports from every quarter, so eager were the sufferers to revenge themselves on this so much dreaded corsair." At the entrance to the Bocca de Cantara great earth-works were arising, and every ship that approached within range was subjected to a furious cannonade; extraordinary exertions were apparently being made on shore to resist to the death.

Those who manned the Christian fleet looked on and laughed; they had no intention of adventuring their lives against these earthworks; all that they had to do was to wait; when this pantomime was over the starving corsairs must surrender and be carried off to Europe to receive their just deserts. It appeared absolutely certain that unless Dragut were possessed of wings and was able to fly away, the end of his career was only the matter of a few days. But even yet Doria and his captains did not know the infinite resourcefulness of the man with whom they had to deal. All the cannonading, all the throwing up of earthworks, the disembarkation of guns, the marchings and counter-marchings of armed men upon the shore, were nothing but a blind, a sort of stage play destined to amuse the foe, and to prevent him from fathoming what the corsair was really doing.

We have said that Dragut knew that escape by way of the Bocca de Cantara was now impossible; as he could not go that way he determined to go another. His plan was simple, and it succeeded, as it deserved to succeed.



The *Royal Sovereign*, body and half-breadth plans, 1637.

We must remember that the galley was comparatively speaking a light vessel, and one that, supposing you had enough hands, could be dragged overland. Dragut had at his command some two thousand islanders as well as the crews of his ships: they were Moslems to a man, and as anxious to cheat the Christians as the pirates themselves. From the head of the harbour these people worked day and night in the construction of a road to the sea on the opposite side of the island. Planks were bolted on to sleepers laid upon the road, the whole was thickly greased, and then at dead of night, with every available pair of arms straining their best for the honour of the Prophet Mohamet—for the corsairs were nothing if not religious, and this was looked upon as a holy war—every galley, galeasse, and brigantine was dragged across the island; launched into the ocean on the opposite side; guns, ammunition, and provisions quickly embarked; and Dragut and his following faded away beyond the skyline, "leaving Andrea Doria with the dog to hold," in the quaint language of Don Luys de Marmol Caravajal, the chronicler of these events, given in his *Descripcion general de Africa*, which was printed in 1573, "en casa de Rene Rabat impresor de libros" at Granada; only some twenty years or so after these occurrences.

Not only did Dragut get clear away in the manner described, but he added insult to injury by capturing the *Patrona* galley sent from Sicily by Don Juan de Vega, to say that reinforcements for the capture of the corsair were on the road. It must have been a sad surprise for the *Patrona* galley! That there was stupefaction in Europe it is easy to imagine; and the sorest man in all

the wide Mediterranean was Andrea Doria, as he weighed once more from the Bocca de Cantara with the inextinguishable shouts of laughter of all the nations and languages ringing in his ears. What the great Emperor said when he heard the news is unfortunately not on record! Dragut met his death at the siege of Malta in 1565; and perhaps it is not too much to say that the heroic defence of the island by the Knights might not have succeeded had he survived.

At the time with which we are now concerned the principal and most formidable enemies of the corsairs, and of all Moslems embarked upon the sea, were the Knights of Malta. Established in that island in the year 1530, their galleys ranged back and forth seeking always for any vessel that flew the crescent banner of Mohamet. Wherever that was to be met, then conflict was certain; and it was a duel to the death as a rule, as neither party would give way until the complete destruction of the foe had been accomplished. The whole history of the knights has been set forth by M. l'Abbé de Vertot, and few more interesting books have ever been written. We can give here but one example of the warfare between the knights and their Moslem foes; it is an instance of the unconquerable spirit that prevailed among those champions of Christendom, who considered that into their hands the honour of the Cross—the symbol of the religion that they professed—had been confided.

It was in June 1570 that Ali Basha, who had succeeded to Dragut as leader of the corsairs in the Mediterranean, was on his way with twenty-four galleys from Algiers to the Golden Horn at Constantinople. Off Cape Passaro, the southernmost point of Sicily, Ali

captured a small vessel, from which he derived the information that five galleys of the Knights of Malta were at anchor at Licata, a small harbour in the vicinity. This was too good an opportunity to be lost; but Ali proceeded with the cunning and caution which was part of his character. If he went in with his twenty-four galleys he could overwhelm and capture the five lying at Licata. But, he argued to his subordinates, if that were done, then the crews of the galleys might possibly escape to the shore. It was well to capture the ships, but what was much better was to seize the proud Knights by whom they were manned; to strip them naked and chain them to the rowers' benches, where they could be flogged and reviled all the day long. For we must understand that, no matter how great a man you were in the sixteenth century, the rowers' bench was your portion if you were captured at sea. You might, if you were sufficiently rich, buy your freedom—otherwise you shared the same fate as the meanest of your crew.

Accordingly, Ali put to sea and stationed himself exactly in the way which the Maltese galleys were bound to take; and presently they were espied coming along in leisurely fashion under oars and sails. Their Moslem foes had lowered down on deck their great lateen yards, in order that they might be less easily discerned; and as it was they saw the Maltese galleys a considerable time before they themselves were discovered. The Knights were entirely unconscious of the fact that any fleet of the enemy was at sea; in consequence their look out was negligent, and they were quite close before they discovered the appalling fact that their way was barred by a force nearly five times as great as that of which

they disposed. There was scant time in which to make up their minds, and four out of the five instantly sought refuge in flight; it was that or annihilation.

But one of the Christian galleys disdained to fly; her name was the *Santa Ana*, and it is a matter for deep regret that the name of her heroic commander has not come down to us. Hædo, the Spanish historian, says: "Una galera hizo cara a los Turcos"—one galley turned her bows towards the Turks. Like the gallant Sir Richard Grenville "at Flores in the Azores," who on that memorable August day in 1591 stood on the deck of the little *Revenge* and "chose to die rather than to dishonour himself, his country, and her Majesty's ship," so did the Knight of Malta bear down on the twenty-four that were his foes. The galleys, it is true, carried guns in their bows, which they discharged as soon as they got close enough to the foe to do any execution; but the range of ordnance was very short, and all the actual fighting was done practically hand to hand. The method adopted was to row as expeditiously as possible, and to drive the prow of your own galley into the broadside of the foe; then you boarded him from over the bows. But all assaults such as this in the open sea are largely in the hands of chance; you might aim at boarding your adversary, whilst he would also aim at boarding you, and it would be mostly luck which decided who gained the advantage in the first shock. After that, mere hammer-and-tongs business decided the battle.

There was a further complication in a galley fight, which occasionally entirely turned the tide of battle, and this was the presence of the galley slaves. It must

never be forgotten that they were the bitterest foes of those who commanded the ship in which they rowed. It was by them that the gallerians were beaten and starved and tortured. It sometimes happened in the press of conflict that a galley slave might break or slip his chains. Then he would apply himself to the task of freeing his comrades in affliction; and, if they did get loose, it was all up with the fighting men in the galley to which they belonged. They were formidable in numbers alone; they were even more terrible in the hate which festered in their hearts. If they freed themselves they would tear up stretchers and seats, they would seize anything and everything which might serve as a weapon, and if all else failed they would fall upon their masters with hands and feet and teeth, and worry them as would a mad dog.

But when the *Santa Ana* "hizo cara," or made head against her foes, any chances of survival for her did not exist. Very soon she had eight of the Moslem galleys surrounding her; all, indeed, that could find means to reach her sides, and her crew were absolutely overwhelmed by the number of their foes. How many of them died, how many of them survived to row the galleys of Ali Basha, we shall never know. It was more than defeat, it was absolute annihilation, and when that grim slaughter was over Ali Basha passed on his way content that one, at least, of his most deadly foes would sail the seas no more.

More than aught else these corsairs of the Mediterranean were—as Ibrahim had said of Barbarossa—"veritable men of the sea." It was upon this element that they passed their lives, and it was owing to this fact

that they were so generally successful. It was an age in which the function of the mariner and the trade of the soldier had not become blended as it did in later times. These pirates perforce adapted themselves to both; fighting on land it is true from time to time, but never so much at home as when they had blue water beneath their feet.

The year after the battle of the *Santa Ana*, that is to say in 1571, was fought the most famous, the most terrible, and the most bloody battle that the navy of oars ever saw—or for that matter almost any navy that ever existed. It was a struggle for the supremacy of the Mediterranean Sea between the Crescent and the Cross; between Soliman the Magnificent on the one side, and the Spaniards, led by Don John of Austria, son of the Emperor Charles v., aided by the Pope, the Venetians, and the Genoese. It is impossible to set down here any account of that battle, as it would take far too much space; we can, however, note that the one commander who came out of it on the Moslem side with credit, and with his fleet in good order, was that man of the sea, Ali Basha, the head of the great corsair confederation existing at that time.

Nothing has been said so far concerning the galeasse. She was really a galley of large size, carrying a very large crew, stronger and better armed than her smaller sister. Although this was the case, she was not so effective a vessel; as she was clumsy to row and heavy in the extreme, and made desperate demands on the hearts and lungs, as well as on the muscles of those by whom she was propelled with gigantic sweeps. In this age there were also craft known by the name of

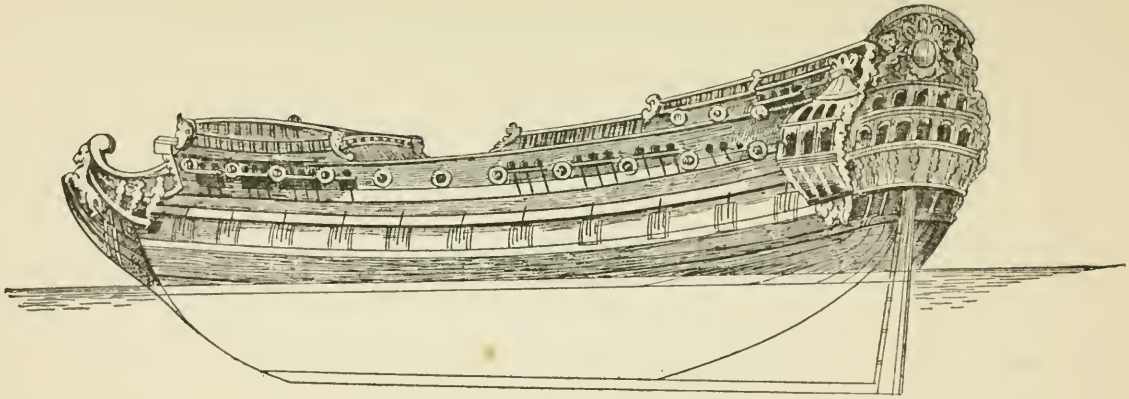
"brigantines," which was applied indifferently to vessels not of the galley type, and not large enough to be classed as round ships. It was in "brigantines" that the aspiring pirate usually learned his trade; until the joyful day arrived when he could steal either enough money to buy a larger vessel; or, better still, to steal the ship herself.

CHAPTER III

FRENCH GALLEYS AND ENGLISH FRIGATE—THE *GALLEON OF VENICE* AT PREVESA

Before we quit the subject of the galley it will be interesting to put on record one of the most remarkable battles ever fought by these vessels, which took place off our own shores. The story is told in *The Memoirs of a Protestant condemned to the Gallies of France for his Religion.* We do not know the name of the author, but he was actually engaged in the battle, and his account of it was first published in Rotterdam in 1757. Much fiction has been written about the sea: no tale was ever stranger than this one, from its extraordinary beginning to its remarkable end.

In the beginning of the summer of 1708, Queen Anne —among many other ships which were put in commission—had one, a vessel of 70 guns, commanded by a Captain Smith, who is described as a "concealed Papist," and who bore an implacable hatred to his country. What our French Protestant has next to tell us seems to the last degree improbable; but according to him, Captain Smith took his ship over to Gothenburg and sold her, either to the King of Sweden or to some private merchants. Having thus disposed of her he passed over into France and offered his services to Louis XIV. to fight against his



. *The Speaker*, a British second-rate, built in 1640. This ship bore the flag of Vice-Admiral Penn in an engagement of three days successively between the English and Dutch Fleets in 1652.

own country. He was received graciously by the King, who promised him the first vacant commission as captain, and in the meanwhile advised him to serve as a volunteer on board the galley of the Chevalier Langeron at Dunkirk. In those days the advice of such a monarch as Louis was not to be disregarded, and Smith repaired at once to Dunkirk, where he was politely received by the Chevalier, who entertained him at his own expense. The teller of the tale then proceeds:

"In all our toilsome but fruitless expeditions to the coasts of England, Captain Smith was one. He would often advise us to make a descent upon the coast in order to burn their towns, where he might at the same time have an opportunity of showing his bravery and gratifying his unnatural hatred. But it was thought too dangerous to comply; the coasts were guarded by patrolling parties, while large bodies of trained troops were placed at convenient distances from each other; a species of animal with which French soldiers do not care to meddle." The story goes on to say that Smith wished particularly to burn Harwich, "a little town situated at the mouth of the Thames"—which shows that our historian was not particularly strong in his geography of the English coast—and that he thought he could accomplish this amiable design if "six galleys were submitted to his command." There was no nice feeling concerning the criminality of burning an inoffensive and unfortified town in those days; and the King approved of the project. He gave orders to Commodore Langeron to follow Captain Smith's instructions; and to the Intendant to furnish whatever was necessary for carrying the expedition to a successful issue.

Commodore the Chevalier Langeron, like the gallant French gentleman that he was, had no taste for being put thus at the disposal of an English traitor, whom, in his heart, he despised; but he had no choice in the matter, and upon 5th September he put to sea on a fine clear morning, with a gentle, favourable wind from the north-east.

"We arrived at the mouth of the Thames," goes on the story, "without using our oars, at about five in the morning; but Smith being of opinion that we were too early, and that we might be discovered if we came too near the shore, ordered us to stand off to sea till night fell, and make our descent when it was dark. We had not laid to half an hour when the sailor at the masthead cried, 'A fleet to the north, steering west, thirty-six sail merchant-built, and escorted by a frigate of about thirty guns.' It was, in fact, a fleet of merchant ships which had left the Texel and were making for the mouth of the Thames. Our Commodore immediately called a council of war, at which it was concluded that, without regarding Harwich, we should endeavour to make ourselves masters of this fleet; that this would be doing the King more service than by burning Harwich; that an opportunity every day would occur for that, but so rich a booty as was now in sight seldom fell to the lot of the seamen of His Majesty. For some reason Smith did not agree with the decision of the council, and urged that it was the duty of the galleys to carry out the orders they had received and to proceed with the burning of Harwich. He was, however, over-ruled, and the galleys stood down with all speed of sails and oars to capture the English merchantmen.

"The Commodore gave orders that four of the galleys should round up and secure the convoy, while he in his Commodore galley, assisted by one other, commanded by the Chevalier Manviliers, should attack and capture the frigate. Four galleys in pursuance of these orders made all speed to interpose themselves between the convoy and the mouth of the Thames, thus entirely cutting off their retreat; while at a more leisurely and dignified pace the two Chevaliers approached the frigate, which they already regarded as their prey."

The tale continues: "The frigate perceiving our designs and the danger which threatened the whole or the greater part of the fleet, took its measures accordingly. It was an English ship, the captain of which had the character of being one of the most resolute yet prudent commanders in the British navy; and indeed his conduct in this conjuncture did not give fame the lie."

The ship in question was the *Nightingale* frigate, of 24 guns and 176 men; she was commanded by Captain Seth Jermy. Our Protestant goes on: "He ordered the merchantmen to crowd all sail possible to get into the Thames, doubting not for his own part that he should be able with his little frigate to cut out work enough for six French galleys, and let what would be the result of the engagement, he was determined not to give out till he saw the ships under his convoy in safety. Pursuant on this resolution he bore down on us as if he intended to be the first aggressor.

"Of the two galleys ordered to attack the frigate, one alone was in a capacity to begin the engagement, as our associate had fallen back a league behind us, either because she did not sail as fast as we, or else her

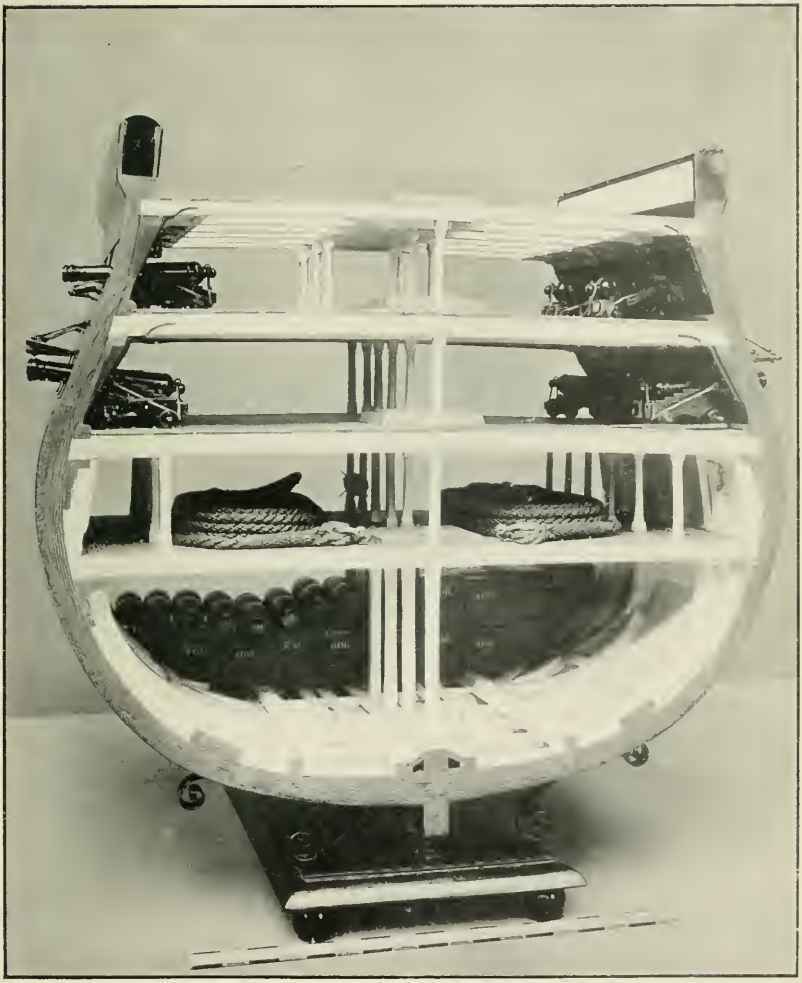
captain chose to let us have the honour of striking the first blow.

"Our Commodore, who seemed in no way disturbed at the approach of the frigate, thought our galley alone would be more than a match for the Englishman; but the sequel will show that he was somewhat deceived in this conjecture. As we approached one another and came within cannon shot, the galley was the first to discharge her guns; meanwhile the din was increased by the shouts of the officers and the yells and curses of the galley slaves as the whips resounded on their bare backs to stimulate them to further exertions.

"The frigate, silent as death, approached us without firing, but seemingly resolved to reserve all her terrors for more close engagement. Our Commodore nevertheless mistook English resolution for cowardice. What, cried he, is the frigate weary of flying English colours, and does she come to surrender without striking a blow? The boast was premature. Still we approached each other and were now within musket shot. The galley incessantly poured in her fire of great guns and small-arms; the frigate meanwhile preserving the most dreadful tranquillity that imagination can conceive. At last the Englishman seemed all at once struck with a panic and began to fly. Nothing gives more spirit than a flying enemy. In consequence the officers began boasting loudly: 'We could at one blast sink a man-of-war: ay, that we could, and with ease too. If the Englishman does not strike within two minutes, down he goes to the bottom': thus the talk ran.

"All this time the frigate was preparing for the tragedy that was to ensue. Her flight was but pretended

PLATE V.



MIDSHIP SECTION OF H.M.S. *RODNEY*, 1833.

and done with a view to entice us to board her over the stern, which as being the weakest quarter, galleys generally chose to attack. Against this they endeavour to drive their beak, and then generally board the enemy, after having cleared the deck with their five pieces of cannon. The Commodore, in such a favourable conjuncture as he imagined this to be, ordered the galley to board, and bid the man at the helm to bury her beak, if possible, in the stern of the frigate. All the sailors and soldiers stood ready with their sabres and battle-axes to execute his commands.

"The frigate, who perceived our intentions, dextrously avoided our beak, which was just ready to dash against her stern, so that instead of seeing the frigate sink in the dreadful encounter, as was expected, we had the mortification to behold her fairly alongside of us, an interview which struck us with terror. Now it was that the English captain's courage was conspicuous. As he had foreseen what would happen he was ready with his grappling irons, and fixed us close by his side. His artillery began to open, charged with grapeshot. All on board the galley were as much exposed as if upon a raft; not a gun was fired that did not make horrible execution; we were near enough to be scorched with the flame.

"The English masts were crowded with sailors, who threw hand grenades among us like hail, that scattered wounds and death wherever they fell. Our crew no longer thought of attacking; they were even unable to make the least defence; and the terror was as great among the officers as among the common men; so much so, that they seemed incapable of resistance, and those

who were neither killed nor wounded, lay flat and counterfeited death to find safety. The enemy, perceiving our fright, now added to it by throwing on board of us forty or fifty men, who hewed down with their cutlasses all who ventured to oppose them, sparing, however, the slaves who made no resistance. After they had cut away thus for some time, being constrained back by our superior numbers, they continued to pour a dreadful fire among us. Chevalier Langeron, seeing himself reduced to this extremity, finding the greater part of his crew either killed or wounded, was the only man on board who had courage enough to wave the flag of distress, by which he called the other galleys of the squadron to his aid.

"The galley which had laid astern was soon up with us; and the other four, who had almost taken possession of the merchantmen, upon seeing our signal and perceiving our distress, quitted the intended prey to come to our assistance. Thus the whole fleet of merchantmen saved themselves in the Thames. The galleys rowed with such swiftness that in less than half an hour the whole six had encompassed the frigate. Her men were no longer able to keep the deck, and she presented a favourable opportunity for being boarded. Twenty-five grenadiers were ordered for this service, and met with no opposition in coming on; but scarcely were they crowded on the deck than they were once again saluted *à l'Anglais.*

"The officers of the frigate were entrenched in the forecastle and fired on the grenadiers incessantly; the rest of the crew, who were down below, fired up at them through the gratings, and at last cleared the ship of the

enemy. Another detachment was ordered on board, and met with the same reception and the same fate.

"By now it must be remembered that the entire six galleys were alongside the frigate ; in spite of the overwhelming numbers of which they were possessed they were unable to beat down her stubborn resistance. Not one of her crew now showed upon her upper deck, and the small-arm fire both from the forecastle and from up the hatches was galling and deadly in the extreme."

The next move on the part of the French was, according to the narrator, to lay open her deck with axes in order to get at the men below. This, of course, is a mistake, as it could hardly have been done had there been no active and resourceful enemy to oppose such action. What happened probably is that they succeeded in breaking in the gratings on the hatches. It somewhat resembled the opening of a sardine tin ; with this difference, that the sardines were resisting violently from inside the lid. At last it was done and the crew forced to surrender ; but then the same operation had to be gone through with the officers in the forecastle, and they gave a great deal of trouble. At last they also were forced to surrender, and the Commodore of the galleys thought that he had finished this troublesome business. But this was far from being the case. It is true that the officers and the crew of the frigate had been disposed of ; but they had yet to defeat the captain. This officer had barricaded himself in his cabin in the after part of the vessel, and continued to fire on the foe, swearing that he would spill the last drop of his blood before he would see the inside of a French prison.

The rest of the English officers, who by this time

had been taken on board the Commodore's galley, described their captain as a man perfectly foolhardy, as one who was determined to blow the frigate into the air rather than strike. They painted his resolution in such colours that the victors began to tremble. Should this madman fire the magazine of his ship, then he would go to glory,—not alone, as he would sink all the six galleys now clinging to the sides of the ship he was fighting so gallantly. In this extremity it was decided to summon the captain in the most gentle terms, and to promise him the kindest treatment should he agree to surrender. But his answer to their blandishments was to keep up an even more rapid and well-sustained fire than before. Orders were accordingly issued that he must be taken dead or alive, and a sergeant and twelve grenadiers received orders to fix bayonets, to charge and break open the door, and to kill him if he refused to surrender. The sergeant and his men would soon have burst in this frail barrier, but the captain, who had anticipated this move, was ready and waiting, and, as soon as the grenadiers got so close that it was impossible to miss, shot the sergeant through the head with his pistol. He dropped dead upon the deck, and the grenadiers betook themselves to flight. They were ordered to return, but refused ; they pointed to the dead body of the sergeant, and said that it was quite certain the next man would meet with the same fate ; for themselves they preferred to live to fight another day.

Again recourse was had to gentle methods, and entreaty was used which at last had the desired success. All this seeming resolution, this conduct which appeared rather the effect of insensibility than prudence, was

artfully assumed only to prolong the engagement till the merchant fleet was in safety. As soon as the English captain perceived that this was the case—which he saw from his cabin window—he began to listen to the offers that were being made to him: yet, in order to prolong the time as much as lay in his power, he pretended another obstacle to his surrendering. He declared that it would be beneath his dignity to deliver up his sword to anyone save the Commodore in person; and he demanded that that officer should come and receive it from his hands, adding that brave men should only be prisoners of each other.

Accordingly a truce was agreed upon until his demand should be reported to the Commodore, who sent word by his second lieutenant that a commander should never quit his post nor his ship. There was after this a good deal of talk, but at last the captain—says the narrator—gave up his sword without further parley, like a real Englishman, despising ceremony when ceremony could be no longer useful. He was now brought before the Commodore, who could not help testifying to some surprise at the inconsiderable figure which had made such a mighty uproar. He was humpbacked, pale-faced, and as much deformed in person as beautiful in mind. The Commodore complimented him on his bravery, adding that his present captivity was but the fortune of war. It was true that he had lost his ship, but he had saved his convoy; and that he should have no reason to regret his being a prisoner, since by the treatment that he should receive his bondage would be merely nominal.

"I feel no regret," replied the little captain; "my duty

called me to defend my charge, though at the loss of my vessel. In what light my services will be represented to my country, I neither know nor care. I might, perhaps, have had more honour among them by saving Her Majesty's ship by flight, and I should certainly have more profit, as I should have been continued in command; but this consolation remains, that I have served England faithfully, nor can I feel any private loss by an action which enriches the public and serves to make my country more happy. Your kind treatment of me may not perhaps be without its reward; though I should never have the opportunity, you will find some of my countrymen who have gratitude, and the fortune which puts me in your power may one day put you in their's."

The noble boldness with which he expressed himself charmed the Commodore. He returned him his sword, saying very politely, "Take, sir, a weapon no man better deserves to wear; forget you are my prisoner, but remember I expect you to be my friend."

The Commodore had cause almost immediately to regret that, in his admiration for the bravery of the Englishman, he had returned to him his sword. The captain, being introduced into the cabin of the galley, beheld the traitor Smith and instantly recognised him. England had set a price of £1000 on the head of this wretch; so he regarded everything that was English with detestation. These two could not long behold each other without feeling those emotions which a contrast between the greatest virtue and vice occasions; and the little captain was all on fire to take vengeance for his country on its betrayer. "Perfidious man," said he, drawing his sword, "since the hand of justice cannot

give you the death you merit, take it from mine," and at the same time he ran against him, resolved to plunge the sword into his breast. Fortunately the Commodore was near enough to protect Smith and prevent the rashness of his conduct by taking the assailant in his arms. In this manner he prevented the contemplated blow, thereby causing more chagrin to the captain than by the loss of his frigate, for he would sooner have slain Smith than have taken all the six galleys.

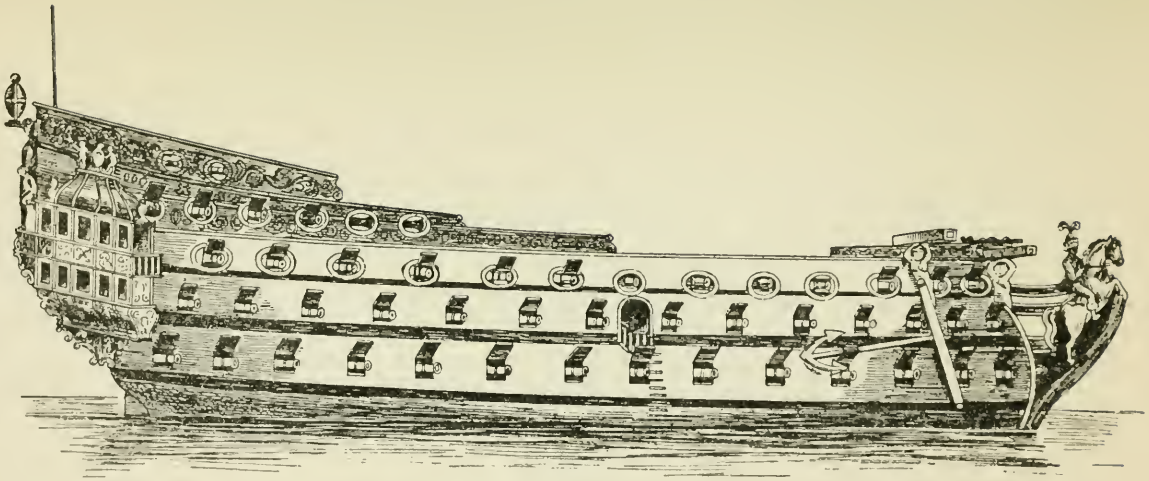
Captain Smith represented to the Commodore that it was highly unfit the prisoner should be in the same vessel as himself—which perhaps in the circumstances is not surprising—and begged that he might be removed to another. This request was refused by the Commodore, alleging that as the prisoner was his, he must abide in his ship, whereas Captain Smith had the choice of five other galleys in which to live. "We took possession of our prize," the tale concludes, "which was called the *Nightingale*; the name of the brave little fellow who commanded her I am not able to remember." His name, as we know, was Seth Jermy, and seldom has any action been fought at sea which reflects more credit on the British flag. What the captain of the *Nightingale* never lost sight of for one moment, was the duty that he had to perform. It was to prevent any damage coming to his convoy, and that duty was carried out not only by hard fighting, but with a grasp of the actual situation, and a lightning-like decision as to the manner in which it was to be met, which stamps this captain as a man of very superior professional attainments. It was by artifice that he drew on the galley of the French Commodore until he had so placed her that she was at

the greatest possible disadvantage; it was then the sheer hard fighting quality of a perfectly trained crew that dealt with her in so terrible a manner, that in the end she had to call upon all her five consorts to come to her aid. A man of lesser calibre might then perchance have given in, arguing that he had done all that was possible, and that further fighting would only lead to useless slaughter.

The captain of the *Nightingale* thought otherwise; all the time he had one eye on the foe, the other on the convoy. He had by the desperate fight he had put up drawn all the enemy around his own ship; he saw that they must be kept there until all the merchantmen had reached the security of the Thames. Even when his officers and his crew had been overwhelmed with numbers, he managed by his single-handed fight in the cabin to put off surrender, with a further delay in the wrangle as to whom he should surrender his sword. That he lost his ship is true, but as he saved his convoy he saved that which was of infinitely greater value.

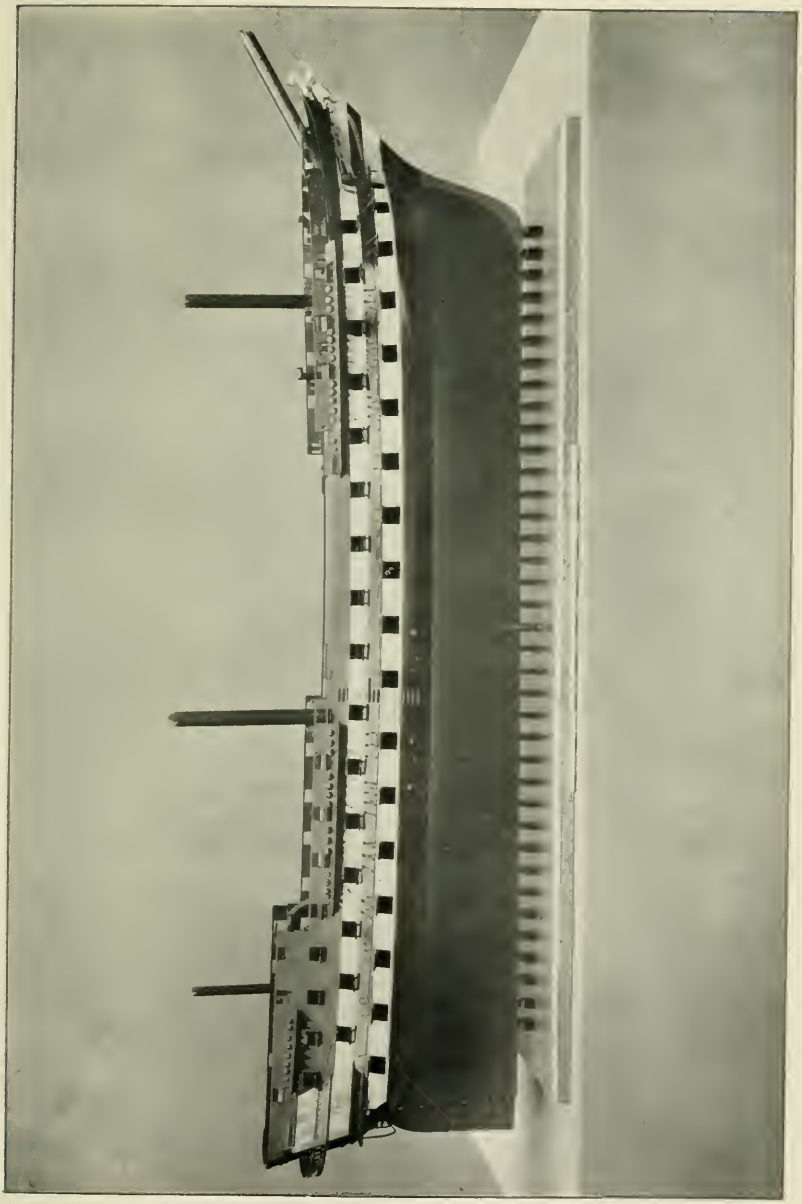
The story loses nothing in the telling; though how its author, in his capacity as a galley slave, was able to hear the somewhat long-winded conversations between the Commodore and the captain, and to report exactly what passed between the traitor Smith and the Englishman in the cabin of the galley, it is somewhat difficult to understand. However, Jean Marteilhe, for such was his name, was there, and has set forth the story with every evidence of being a truthful account of what happened.

There was, however, a sequel which can by no



The *Royal Charles*, built in 1637.

PLATE VI.



H.M.S. *ALBION*, 1842.

means be passed over. The *Nightingale*, it would appear, was handed over to Smith, who fitted her out as a privateer and sailed her from the port of Dunkirk, from whence so many of those old-time sea rovers have sailed and devastated the commerce of England. This was the period during which the famous Jean Bart, the almost equally well-known Duguay Trouin, and Jacques Cassard were making the narrow seas between France and England almost impossible for the wretched mariners who navigated the merchant ships of England, and to their malign activities were now added those of Captain Smith, Englishman and traitor. He must, to give him his due, have been a dauntless villain, as he fought always with a rope around his neck: time was to decide for him when it was to tighten, and when he should come to the end that he had so richly deserved. This end it happened was not very long delayed; the *Nightingale* fell in with the British ship of war *Ludlow Castle*, commanded by Captain Haddock, and by her was taken. Great was the jubilation when it was discovered that Smith had fallen into their hands; Haddock, in his official dispatch, said: "I am glad it has been my good fortune to bring that gentleman to England."

Smith, with his lieutenant Aislaby, Harwood, an Irish priest, and two others were tried at the Old Bailey, 2nd June 1708. On 18th June he was "put on a hurdle and conveyed to the place of execution; . . . being dead, he was cut down, his body opened, and his heart shown to the people, and afterwards burnt with his bowels and his body quartered."

We have dealt with the navy of oars at some length, because, in its day, it was highly important, and by it a

great deal of hard fighting was done. At the same time it must not be imagined that because there was a vogue for oar-propelled vessels, especially in the Mediterranean, that therefore the sailing ship was not also employed to a large extent. Both at the battle of Prevesa in 1538, and the battle of Lepanto in 1571, although the greater number of the craft employed were galleys, galeasses, and others that made use of oars, still there were squadrons of sailing vessels as well, to some of which the rowing craft were apt to give a wide berth. At Prevesa one of these sailing ships was known as the *Galleon of Venice*. She was what we should now call the flagship of the Venetian "Nefs." Here we may remark that the names of different classes of ships in the old days are most confusing; sometimes they are alluded to as Nefs, sometimes as galleons, sometimes as carracks, but all these names denote sailing ships, some of large tonnage for their date, and with an armament that was most formidable in their day.

It was indeed this quality of theirs, that of being able to carry heavier and more powerful guns, that caused the galley and other craft of that description to fall into disrepute. The day on which Prevesa was fought—it was in September—a calm prevailed during the day, in consequence of which the galleys were able to manœuvre, and the sailing ships floated idly on the calm surface of the sea. The *Galleon of Venice* was separated from her consorts and, in consequence, formed an object of attack for the galleys, which came on, squadron after squadron, discharged their guns at her and then wheeled outwards, making room for another division of their comrades. But the galleon was then supposed to be the most formidable

fighting vessel in the Mediterranean. She was reckoned an excellent sailer; she was far the most heavily armed sailing craft afloat; in fact, in the opinion of the seamen of her time, she was considered to be "an invincible fortress." As this is perhaps one of the best instances of a battle between sails and oars, we may quote the description which appears of it in the author's book, *Sea Wolves in the Mediterranean.*

"The position of Condalmiero (he was the captain of the *Galleon of Venice*) was that of a modern battleship which is disabled and surrounded by foes in full possession of their motive power; the great galleon floated inert upon the waters, while the galleys could fight or fly as they wished. The captain of the galleon, however, had no alternative save to surrender or fight; but there was no hesitation on his part, for a more gallant officer never trod the decks of a warship of the proud Republic to which he belonged.

"The Moslem galleys were now close upon him, although as yet out of gunshot; around him they circled and wheeled like a flight of great seabirds, their ferocious crews shouting their war-crys, calling upon Allah and the Prophet to give them the victory for which they craved; many a brave Venetian, who heard for the first time the name of Barbarossa shouted in battle, must have braced himself for the coming conflict, knowing all that was imported by that terrible name. The sun shone in a cloudless sky, the galleon lay becalmed in the middle of furious and ravening foes, the succour promised by Doria (Andrea Doria, the Christian Admiral in command on this day) was ten miles away; they saw no movement which indicated help, and the odds against them were

heavy indeed. But all the nervousness was not on one side, for the *Galleon of Venice* was something new in the naval warfare of the time; she carried engines of destruction in the shape of great guns which the corsairs could by no means equal. Of this they were well aware, and the attack was delayed while the oarsmen in the galleys rested on their oars out of range to allow them breathing time before the supreme moment arrived. But the hounds were only held in the leash; there came a signal which was answered by a concentrated yell of fury and hate; then from right ahead, right astern, on the port side and the starboard, the galleys were launched to the attack. But all on board the great Venetian vessel was still as that death which awaited so many of the combatants in this supreme struggle. Condalmiero had caused the crew of the galleon to lie down upon her decks and stood himself, a gallant solitary figure in his shining armour, a mark for the hail of shot so soon to be discharged. It came, and with it the mast of the galleon bearing the Lion Standard of St. Mark crashed over the side into the water; renewed yells of triumph came from the Moslems, but still that ominous silence reigned on board the galleon. Untouched, unharmed, the Osmanlis came on, firing as rapidly as possible until they were absolutely within arquebuss range. Closer they came and closer; then the sides of the galleon burst into sheeted flame, and the guns, levelled at point-blank range, tore through the attacking host. Condalmiero was throwing away no chances; he had directed his gunners to allow their balls to ricochet before striking rather than to throw them away by allowing them to fly over the heads of the enemy.

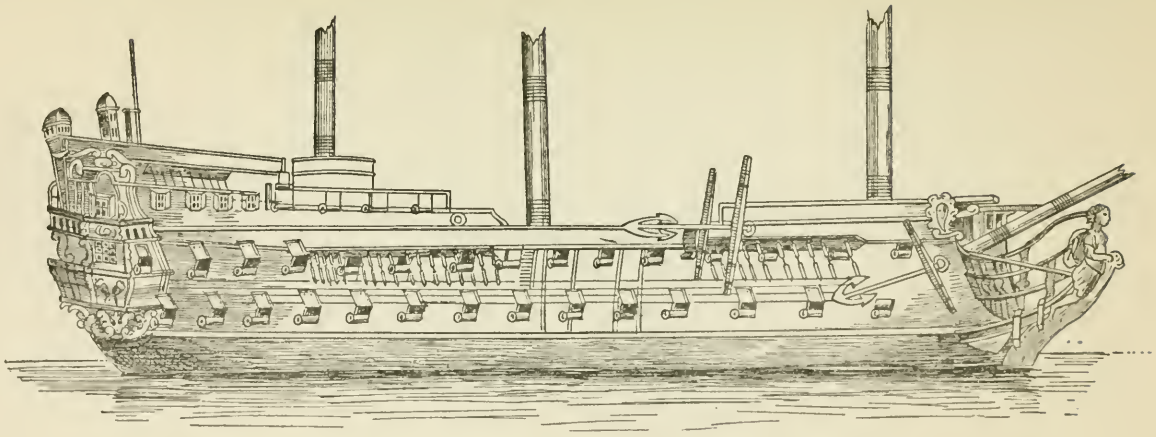
"The first broadside did terrible execution; a ball 120 lb. in weight, fired by the chief bombardier, Francisco d'Arba, in person, burst in the prow of a galley so effectually that all her people flew aft to the poop to prevent the water rushing in; but the vessel was practically split in twain and sank in a few moments. All around were dead and dying men, disabled galleys, floating wreckage; the *Galleon of Venice* had taken a terrible toll of the Osmanli; the order to retreat out of range was given, and never was order obeyed with greater alacrity.

"With accuracy and precision the galleon played upon such vessels as remained within range, doing great execution. But she was now to be subjected to an even severer test than the first headlong attack. She had demonstrated to the Moslem leaders that here was no vessel to be carried by mere reckless valour; a disciplined and ordered offensive was the only plan which promised success; the Osmanli must use their brain as well as their courage if that tattered flag, rescued from the water and nailed to the stump of the mast of the galleon, was ever to be torn down. There was something daunting in the very aspect of the solid bulk of the huge Venetian, something weird in the way in which her crew never showed, save only the steadfast figure of her captain, immovable as a figure of bronze, where he stood on her shot-torn poop.

"This Homeric conflict was a triumph of discipline and gunnery on the part of the Venetians; alert, accurate, and cool, the gunners of the galleon threw away none of their ammunition. Inspired by the heroic spirit of their captain, great was the honour which they did on this

stricken field to the noble traditions of their forbears and the service to which they belonged. The first attack had been most brilliantly repulsed, but this was only preliminary to a conflict which was to last all through the day; the Moslem galleys withdrew out of gunshot and re-formed; then a squadron of twenty advanced, delivered their fire and retired, their place being taken by a second squadron, which went through the same performance, only to give place to a third. In this manner the attack, which began one hour after noon, and which was continued until sunset, was conducted.

"The galleon had thirteen men killed and forty wounded; no doubt the slaughter would have been much greater had it not been for the enormous thickness of her sides, and for the fact that the guns carried by the galleys were necessarily light. Notwithstanding, the galleon suffered terribly, and she was little better than a mass of wreckage. Twice fire had broken out on board, and she was cumbered by fallen masts, battered almost out of recognition, but still Condalmiero and his gallant crew fought on imperturbably with no thought of surrender. Covered with blood, wounded in the face and the right leg by flying splinters, her captain preserved his magnificent coolness, and his decimated crew responded nobly to his call. At eventide the fire from the galleon was almost as deadly as it had been at the first onslaught, and many galleys of the Turks were only saved from sinking by the activity and bravery of their carpenters, who, slung over their sides in "boatswain's chairs," drove home huge plugs of wood with their mallets into the shot-holes made by the Venetian guns.



The *Invincible*, French 74-gun ship, captured in 1747.

The "Galleon of Venice" at Prevesa

"At the hour when the sun dipped below the horizon all the Turkish fleet seemed assembled to assault the colossus which so long had resisted their attack; there was a pause in the combat and the firing died down. Condalmiero and his men braced themselves for the assault which they felt to be inevitable; for now the darkness was swiftly coming, and they would no longer be able to see to shoot, while under cover of night their numerous foes could assail them by boarding in comparative safety. Now the moment had come for the last act in this terrible drama of the sea. They had held their own at long odds throughout the whole of a hot September day, and as the level beams of the setting sun shone on their shattered ship they were prepared to die fighting to the last man for the honour of Venice and the glory of St. Mark.

"Stiff and worn, wearied almost to the breaking strain, there was no man on board who even dreamt of surrender; all the guns were charged to the muzzle with bullets and broken stone; the artillerists, match in hand, stood grimly awaiting the order to fire, straining their eyes and their ears in the gathering darkness: in a few minutes at most they knew that the fate of the *Galleon of Venice* must be decided.

"On board his galley, decorated for the occasion with scarlet banners, Barbarossa himself directed the assaulting line. Never before when the battle was joined had the gallant corsair been known to draw back; and yet on this occasion he not only hesitated but actually hauled off. The Venetians saw to their amazement that the expected attack was not to be pushed home, for Barbarossa and his captains fell

upon some lesser vessels. The *Galleon of Venice* was victorious!

. . . . . .

"There was glory won on this day, but it was gained neither by Andrea Doria nor Kheyr-ed-Din Barbarossa. The *Galleon of Venice*, with Alessandro Condalmiero and his gallant crew, had shown to all a splendid example of disciplined valour unexcelled in sixteenth century annals."

We have seen how, nearly two centuries after the battle of Prevesa, the galley was still actively employed; but notwithstanding this, she did not count for much after the end of the seventeenth century; as from the time of the *Galleon of Venice* onwards, the sailing man-of-war was increasing in size and power to such an extent, that small craft were not likely to prevail in any conflict in which they were engaged. Although the galleys kept the sea, still they were frail vessels, obliged to seek shelter when bad weather came on, and were kept in harbour during the winter for fear of their being overwhelmed by the winds and the waves.

SHIPS OF THE LINE OF THE 'FIFTIES.

CHAPTER IV

TUDOR SHIPS AND MEN

The sailing man-of-war in the time of Henry VIII. reached a considerable size, although she was far from being what seamen would call a weatherly vessel. In spite of the fact that her progression through the water —unless she were in front of the wind—was apt to resemble that of a crab, still she was big and strong and able to withstand the ordinary buffetings that any ship has cause to expect when she puts to sea.

Everyone has heard of *The Great Harry*; but owing to the practice in the times of the Tudors to name successive ships alike, it has been difficult to distinguish between the *Great Harry*—supposed to have been built by King Henry VII. about 1488–1503—and the *Great Harry*, or *Henri Grace à Dieu*, of the reign of Henry VIII. Authentic records, however, exist of this last-named ship having been built at Woolwich in 1512–15, of her engagement with a French fleet in 1545 off the Isle of Wight, and of her accidental destruction by fire at Woolwich in 1553. She carried four masts, each made in a separate piece without a topmast; all the masts were square-rigged; that is to say, they had yards which went across them, and she was fitted with a long bowsprit. She was about 1000 tons burden, and carried

a crew of 700 men. She had twenty to thirty large cannon and a very large number of smaller guns.

In "The Rolle declaring the Nombre of the Kynges Maiesty's owne Galliasses," half of which is in the British Museum and the other half in the Pepysian Library of Magdalene College, Cambridge, are coloured drawings by one Anthony Anthony representing ships of the time. This "Rolle" originally belonged to Samuel Pepys, the secretary to the Admiralty in the time of Charles II. Here are two pictures of the *Murrian* and the *Struse*. The *Murrian* was a ship of 500 tons, with a crew of 300 men, and she carried 10 brass and 53 iron guns. The *Struse* was 450 tons, with a crew of 250 men, carrying 39 iron guns. All the ships of this time, and for many years after, resembled one another in the way that they were built. They were provided with a sterncastle and a forecastle—which latter name has survived on board ship to the present day—and the space in between these two "castles," known as the waist, was, comparatively speaking, very low.

There was one matter to which the seamen of the Tudor period paid an amount of attention that has been the wonder and surprise of all succeeding generations of mariners; this was the manner in which their vessels were beflagged. The modern British man-of-war flies a White Ensign at her peak, the Union Jack forward on what is known as the jackstaff, and a pennant, a thin whip of bunting, at the maintruck if she be commanded by a captain, or a white flag with a red St. George's Cross in it at mizzen main or fore if she carries an Admiral. But such simplicity as this would

not do for the tarpaulins of King Henry VIII.! The picture of the *Struse*, for instance, displays the national flag on a staff in the stern, and around the sterncastle are five additional flags of size equal to it, each on its separate staff. On the forecastle are four more flags similarly displayed; and at each truck—which means the extreme summit of the mast—is also displayed a large square flag. In addition to all these there depend from the "tops,"—which are platforms about two-thirds of the way up the masts,—of three of the masts out of the four with which the vessel is provided, immense streamers, or swallow-tailed banners, as long as the ship itself. Two more square flags on staves in the waist, complete her equipment in this respect.

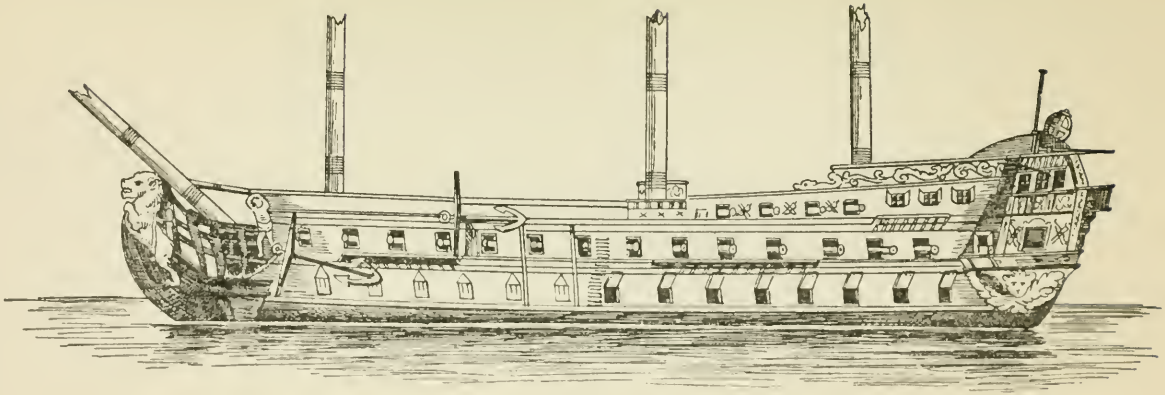
The tops of the castles were painted with the colours and devices of the Admiral or the captain; the arms of these officers were also displayed on shields; and apparently as much colour as possible was used in the painting of the hull. Also, it was by no means infrequent to have the sails painted with different devices; so altogether a ship in Tudor times must indeed have presented a brave and gallant show when she first put to sea. After a couple of heavy gales of wind it is possible to imagine, however, that most of this rare show had disappeared.

The question that the modern seaman puts when he sees the pictures of these vessels, is how they managed to keep all the flags and the streamers clear of their sails and running rigging; and even when they did haul them down, how they found room for them in their dreadfully overcrowded ships. A ship such as the

Great Harry would be manned by some 700 men, and the number of guns that she mounted on board were not only almost beyond calculation, but also were of so many diverse descriptions as to be absolutely bewildering. Each separate sort of gun on board any man-of-war naturally has a different projectile and a different cartridge with which it is loaded; the more classes of guns you carry the more you have to split up your ship below into magazines, and the more you have to divide your crew into different parties for providing ammunition.

William Bourne, who wrote a book in the year 1587, entitled *The art of shootinge in great ordnance. Contayning very necessary matters for all sorts of servitours eyther by land or sea*, tells us of the guns that were then in use. His list begins with the Double Cannon or Cannon Royal. This piece was a muzzle-loading weapon 11 feet long with a bore of $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches, firing a ball weighing 60 lb. The Demi Cannon was 10 feet long with a $6\frac{1}{2}$-inch bore, firing a 30-lb. shot. The Whole Culverin was a 17-pounder. The Demi Culverin was a 9-pounder. The Saker was a 5-pounder. The Minion was a 4-pounder. The Falcon was a 3-pounder. The Falconet was a $1\frac{1}{2}$-pounder. The Robinet was a 1-pounder. The Base was a breechloader with a bore of $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, 4 feet long, with a 9-inch chamber for the charge and projectile. There was also a Cannon Perier, a short-range 24-pounder gun that fired broken stones.

In the *Elizabeth Jonas*—a "great ship" of 900 tons belonging to Queen Elizabeth's navy—there were mounted no less than 50 guns, 34 heavy and 16 light. There were Demi Cannon, Cannon Perier, Culverins,



The *Glorioso*, a Spanish 74-gun ship, captured by the *Russell*, Captain Buckle, in September 1747.

Demi Culverins, forming her "heavy" battery. What the composition of the "light" battery was, we are not told, but doubtless it was as diverse in its composition as was the other. What the confusion must have been on board in time of battle, trying to provide for each of these different classes of guns, it is easy to imagine.

Dreadful disasters happened from time to time to these ships, and perhaps one of the most notable is that which happened to the *Mary Rose*. In the year 1545 the French King gave orders to Monsieur d'Annebault, Admiral of France, to assemble his ships and to make a demonstration on the coast of England. Monsieur d'Annebault, after being reinforced by 25 galleys from the Mediterranean and commanded by Paulin Baron de la Garde, sailed to execute his orders. Henry VIII. being at Portsmouth when the French arrived, ordered out his navy to drive them from Spithead, and they accordingly sailed. There happened to be a fresh breeze blowing, and the *Mary Rose*, whose lower ports were only 16 inches from the water, heeled over considerably as she met a squall in the neighbourhood of the Isle of Wight. All her lower-deck ports being open, the water came in with a sudden rush, and she foundered almost at once and all hands were lost. It is said that Henry, who beheld this spectacle, wept at the sight of the awful tragedy.

There was a curious sequel to the foundering of the *Mary Rose*, as it is only some twelve years ago that 3 guns, which the experts decided had undoubtedly belonged to the ill-fated vessel, where recovered from the bottom of the sea in the neighbourhood of St. Helens. These guns were brought to Portsmouth, and are now

reposing in that most interesting museum of naval relics that has been formed there at the Royal Gunwharf. There is one thing that is particularly well worth noticing concerning these guns, and this is how in gun construction, as in everything else, history is apt to repeat itself. The great gun of our own day consists of a steel rifled inner tube, while the rest of the gun consists of what is called wire, but which is in reality a thin flat ribbon of steel that is wound round and round the inner tube, at a tremendous strain, by special machines, until the remainder of the gun is built up. The same principle, though not the same materials, was used in the guns of this ship of Tudor times, as they are made of iron bars, the interstices between the bars being filled in with wood, and the whole firmly bound together with hemp rope. It is really wonderful that the rope should have lasted under water for over three hundred and fifty years; and it speaks well for the sound hempen cord that was turned out by the ropemakers of bluff King Hal.

Richard Grafton, an author who flourished at the time of Queen Elizabeth, has left us the following description of the loss of the *Mary Rose*. He says: "After the departyng of the Englishe navy from Newhaven, the admirall of Fraunce, called lorde Dannibalt, a man of great experience, halsed up his sayles, and with his whole navie came to the poynt of the Isle of Wight called St. Helene's poynt, and there, in good order, cast their ankers, and sent sixteen of his gallies daily to the very haven of Portesmouth. The Englishe navie lying in the haven made them prest and set out towards them, and still the one shot at the other.

The whole navie of the Englishemen made out and purposed to set on the Frenchmen, but in their settying forward, a goodlye shippe of England, called the *Marye Rose*, was by much folly drowned in the middle of the haven; for she was laden with too much ordnaunce and the ports left open, which were very low, and the great ordnaunce unbreached, so that when the shippe should turn, the water entered, and sodainely she sank. In her was Sir George Carew, Knight, captaine of the sayde shippe, and foure hundred men, and much ordnaunce."

There is one sentence in this account that is not very clear to the reader of the present day; this is "made them prest." This evidently refers to the *Mary Rose* getting her crew on board. Sir John Knox Laughton, who is a great authority, tells us that in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries a "prest man" meant one who had enlisted and received the "prest" of twelve pence or less per day. Later on, of course, the pressed man meant one who had been captured by the press gang, and was compelled to serve on board a man-of-war, whether or not it suited his convenience so to do. There is evidence in this description also that the *Mary Rose* put to sea in a hurry, as "the great ordnaunce were unbreached," meaning that the heavy guns which she carried were not properly secured. "When the shippe should turn," that is when she put about on the other tack, she heeled over so that the water entered her lower-deck ports, and so the end came with a dreadful suddenness.

Grafton tells us an anecdote concerning a single-ship action that is too good to be missed in speaking of Tudor ships and Tudor men. What a "craer"

may have been it is impossible to say; but it is evident that she was a craft of quite inconsiderable size. The "isle of Brasile" referred to, was the country now known to us as part of the continent of South America; in Grafton's time ideas on the subject of geography on the western side of the Atlantic were necessarily scanty. This is the tale that he tells:

"In this time there was by the Frenchmen a voyage made to the isle of Brasile, with a ship called the *Barke Agar*, which they had taken from the Englishemen before. And in their way they fortuned to meet sodainely with a little craer of whome was mayter (master) one Coldyng, which Coldyng was a feat and hardie man. The barke perceyving this small craer to be an Englisheman, shot at him, and bouged him" (the verb "to bouge" does not appear in any dictionary accessible; we may conclude that it meant to hit in the hull, from what occurred afterwards); "wherefore the craer drew straight to the great ship, and six or seven of the men lept into the barke. The Frenchmen lookinge over the boorde at the sinkinge of the craer, nothing mistrusting anything that might be done by the Englishemen; and so it fortuned that those Englishemen who climed into the shippe, found in the end thereof a great number of lime pots, which they with water quenched, or rather as the nature thereof is, set them a fyre, and threw them at the Frenchmen that were aboorde, and so blynded them, that those few Englishemen that entered that shippe, vanquished all that were therein and drave them under hatches, and brought the barke clerely away to England."

One thing is evident from this narrative, which is

that the man who set it down was no seaman himself; it is much to be regretted that that "feat and hardie man" Coldyng did not write the story, and tell us where and how he found that "great number of lime pots" which proved so invaluable a weapon in the recapturing of the *Barke Agar*; also why the crew of that gallant vessel spent their time "lookinge over the boorde at the sinkinge of the craer," instead of attending to the business of repelling the boarders from the sinking craer!

The name Dreadnought is so much in everybody's mouth nowadays, in speaking of the all-big-gun ships that form the battle fleets of the principal navies of our own time, that it is interesting to compare the vessel that bore that historic name in the time of Queen Elizabeth, with those monsters of the deep with which we are now familiar. In 1578 the *Dreadnought* was a ship of 400 tons and was manned by 250 people; whereof, says the roll of the navy for that date, there were: mariners, 140; gunners, 20; and soldiers, 80; the remaining 10 were officers. The furniture of the ship—that is to say, the small-arms carried—were: Harquebusses, 80; Bows, 25; Arrows, sheaves of, 50; Pikes, 50; Bills, 60; and corselets, 40. Then comes an entry of "mariners eighty," though what sort of weapon a mariner may have been, does not appear. We have already commented on the immense number of guns carried by these ships—guns, that is to say, light and heavy, classed as "ordnaunce," with all the diversified ammunition for the purpose of loading the same; and the longer the tale becomes the more we are lost in speculation as to where everything was stowed!

There was one thing of which they had no need to carry much, at any rate, and that was money in the shape of cash for the payment of officers and men. As a matter of fact, none was carried save in small amounts, and what few pieces the officers may have had in their private possession, as it was customary for people to be paid when they returned home, no matter how long it might be since they left their native shores.

But "The charges of the Army by Sea of our Sovran King Henry 8th," set forth on 1st March 1513, do not err on the side of extravagance. For instance, we find there: "Captain the Lord Ferrers paid 18d. this day," "The retinue of the said Lord, every man five shillings a month," "Gunners every man five shillings a month," "Rewards to gunners five shillings a month," "To Quartermasters every one of them two shillings and sixpence," "Twenty-four gunners and the mate of the gunners at twenty pence the month." It is true, of course, that money then was worth more than six times as much as it is now, but if we multiply all the stipends that we have mentioned by six, even then they can hardly be called magnificent!

A distinguished officer of our own time, Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge, tells us in a very interesting chapter of his book, *Sea Power and Other Studies* (which chapter is entitled "Queen Elizabeth and her Seamen"), that the sailor was far better off in the reign of Elizabeth than he was in the time of her father. The Admiral says: "In 1585 the sailor's pay was raised from 6s. 8d. to 10s. a month. A rise of pay that cannot be called illiberal. The Elizabethan 10s. would be equal to £3 in our present accounts; . . . the usual pay for labourers was

2d. or 3d. a day. Ploughmen received a shilling a week. In those cases board was given. The sailor's pay was 2s. 6d. a week, with board."

It has very often been said that Queen Elizabeth starved her sailors, but this Sir Cyprian Bridge stoutly denies, and we extract the comparison that he gives of the scale of food that was issued to the sailor, first in the days of Elizabeth, next in the early days of Queen Victoria. The scale is for the amount of each article in weight weekly.

In Queen Elizabeth's time the mariner received eight pounds of beef, seven pounds of biscuit, nine pounds of salted fish, three-quarters of a pound of cheese, and seven gallons of beer. In Queen Victoria's time he got seven pounds of beef, seven pounds of biscuit, three and a half pounds of vegetables, seven-eighth's of a pint of spirits, one and three-quarter ounces of tea, fourteen ounces of sugar, and seven ounces of cocoa. What Admiral Bridge is anxious to prove is, that the historians who state that good Queen Bess starved her sailors are inaccurate in their statements, and from the table which we have copied from his book it seems certain that they were not worse off than sailors in later days, except in one respect, which was that as time went on better methods were discovered for the preservation of food, and in consequence it would keep longer. No doubt the beer was very bad; but anyone who has tried to keep beer on board ship knows that it is almost impossible—if not quite—to keep it in casks in a state fit to drink.

It was rather difficult in the early years of the reign of King Henry VIII. to decide who, among the mariners

then sailing the seas, was a pirate and who was not, and considerable controversy arose on this vexed question between the English and the Scotch in the case of Andrew Barton. The Bartons were a Scotch family, also a family of sailors, and in 1476 one John Barton was captured by the Portuguese, who refused either to let him go or to compensate his family in any way. Accordingly King James III. of Scotland granted letters of marque to the Barton family to make war as privateers against the Portuguese. In 1506, King James built a great ship called the *Lion*, and gave the command of the vessel to Andrew Barton, who forthwith put to sea, and in the name of his sovereign chastised certain "Flemish pirates" who then infested the narrow seas and preyed upon Scottish commerce. Having finished with these persons Barton turned his attention to the private feud of his own family and harried the Portuguese. He cruised in the Channel in the *Lion*, and with him and under his orders was another ship, called the *Jenny Pirwin.*

No one in England or Scotland cared one straw about Andrew Barton stopping and plundering Portuguese ships; but when vessels of this nationality began to run short and the valiant Andrew took to overhauling the merchant ships of England, the matter assumed quite a different complexion. Complaints to King Henry caused that monarch to fit out two ships manned with picked men under the command of Lord Thomas Howard and Lord Edward Howard, both sons of the Earl of Surrey. Sir Walter Scott says that they found Barton and his vessels cruising in the Downs, being guided to the place by the captain of a merchant

vessel whom Barton had plundered on the preceding day. On approaching the enemy the noble brothers showed no ensign of war, but put up a willow wand on their masts as being the emblem of a trading vessel. But when the Scotsman attempted to make them bring to, the English threw out their flags and pennons and fired a broadside of their ordnance. Barton then knew that he was engaged with the King of England's ships of war. Far from being dismayed at this, he engaged boldly, and distinguished by his rich dress and bright armour appeared on deck with a whistle of gold about his neck, suspended by a chain of the same precious metal, and encouraged his men to fight valiantly.

The fight was very obstinate. If we may believe a ballad of the time, Barton's ship was furnished with a peculiar contrivance suspending large weights or beams from his yardarms, to be dropped down upon the enemy when he should come alongside. To make use of this contrivance, it was necessary that a person should ascend the mainmast, or, in naval language, go aloft. As the English apprehended much mischief from the consequences of this manœuvre, Howard had stationed a Yorkshire gentlemen named Hustler, the best archer in the ship, with strict injunctions to shoot everyone who should attempt to go aloft to let fall the beams of Barton's vessel. Two men were successively killed in the attempt, and Andrew Barton himself, confiding in the strong armour which he wore, began to ascend the mast. Lord Thomas Howard called out to the archer to shoot true, on peril of his life. "Were I to die for it," said Hustler, "I have but two arrows left." The first which he shot bounded from Barton's armour without hurting

him ; but as the Scottish mariner raised his arm to climb higher, the archer took aim where the armour afforded him no protection, and wounded him mortally through the armpit.

Barton descended from the mast. "Fight on," he said, "my brave hearts ; I am a little wounded, but not slain. I will rest awhile and then rise and fight again ; meantime stand fast by St. Andrew's Cross," meaning the Scottish flag or ensign. He encouraged his men with his whistle while the breath of life remained. At length the whistle was heard no longer, and the Howards, boarding the vessel, found that her captain was dead. They carried the *Lion* into the Thames, and it is remarkable that Barton's ship became the second man-of-war in the English Navy.

The ballad we have mentioned says :

"My Lord Howard tooke a sworde in his hand
And smote of Sir Andrew's head ;
The Scots stood by and did weepe and mourn
But never a word durst speake or say.

He caused the body to be taken downe,
And over the hatch-bord cast into the sea,
And about his middle three hundred crowns :
'Wheresoever thou lands itt will bury thee.'

With his head they sayled into England againe
With right good will, and fforce and main,
And the day before Yeerseven
Into Thames mouth they came againe.

. . . . . .

Then King Henerye shiffted his roome ;
In came the Queene and ladyes bright ;
Other arrand they had none
But to see Sir Andrew Bartton, Knight.

But when they see his deadly face,
His eyes were hollow in his head;
'I wold give a hundred pound,' sais King Henerye,
'The man were alive as hee is dead.'"

. . . . . .

There are several points in this story which might be criticised from the point of view of the sailor; to sling beams from yardarms is one of them, and the going aloft of a man in full armour is another, but there is no occasion to trouble too much about such matters. Andrew Barton, as stout and valiant mariner as ever sailed the seas, died as he lived, with his good sword in his hand, and with his last breath cheering on his gallant Scots to fight for bonnie Scotland and the blue St. Andrew's Cross.

CHAPTER V

WHEN THE INVINCIBLE ARMADA CAME

After the "New World"—as America was termed when it was first discovered—became a topic of talk in Europe, certain Englishmen set out to see for themselves what this place was like; and they brought back most marvellous reports of the riches that were there to be found. As the years rolled by these reports were proved to be by no means all idle tales, and in 1578 Drake crossed the Atlantic in the *Pelican*, of 100 tons; raided Nombre de Dios—Spanish for "name of God," as in all outward observances the Spanish were by far the most religious persons of the time—and also intercepted three caravans of mules, which carried in all thirty tons weight of silver. His return to his own country, laden with an immense booty, created the most tremendous exitement; but this was nothing to that caused on the return from his next voyage, on which he captured the great Spanish galleon which sailed once a year from Lima to Cadiz. From this veritable treasure-ship he took, we are told, jewels in enormous numbers, eighty pounds weight of gold, twenty-six tons of silver, and thirteen chests of silver coin, at a time when his own country and the mighty Spanish Empire were nominally at peace.

PLATE IX.

TORPEDO BOAT DESTROYER.

Elizabeth hesitated as to whether Drake should be put in prison as a pirate, or whether he should be suitably rewarded; she decided on the latter course, and the adventurous mariner was knighted by his sovereign on the deck of his ship, the *Golden Hind.* At this time King Philip II. of Spain was busily engaged in a war with his subjects in what were then known as "The Low Countries," meaning that part of the Northern Coast of Europe which now forms the Kingdoms of Holland and Belgium. This war, which was conducted in the name of religion, the Low-Country folk having embraced the Reformed or Protestant form of worship, which Philip was attempting to stamp out by force of arms, was enormously costly both in men and money. Literally, "to carry on the war," the Spanish King relied on the safe arrival of the Lima galleon. That it should have been captured by a foreigner was not a matter that so mighty a sovereign could overlook, and the Spanish ambassador in England was called upon to represent this fact in no uncertain terms to the English Queen.

The Ambassador accordingly took a very high hand with Elizabeth; threatening war unless reparation were made, the booty returned to its original owners, and the freebooter Drake given up to his master to deal with as he should think fit. But the English Queen was not an easy person to intimidate; the Tudors had many faults, but want of courage can never be brought to their charge; and the Ambassador had to report to his master that she answered all his bluster by telling him "quietly, in her most natural voice, as if she were telling a common story, that if I used threats of that kind she would fling me into a dungeon." Talk such as this could have but one end,

and war was now inevitable between the two countries. In 1587, Drake put to sea again, destroyed thirty-seven of the enemy's vessels in Cadiz Bay, and made an attack on Corunna, thus, in his own words, "singeing the King of Spain's beard." He would have done far more damage had he not been recalled to England by the Queen. All this time the Armada that was destined to attempt the conquest of England was in course of preparation. Drake's attacks, destroying as they did many ships and much in the way of accumulated stores, delayed the sailing of that force very considerably. Then the Duke of Santa Cruz, who had been appointed to the chief command, died, and Philip had great difficulty in finding a successor. There were no more gallant and capable soldiers than were the nobles and caballeros of Spain, but they had not the habit of the sea, and felt that such a command might lead to ignominious failure—as, indeed, in the end it did.

Someone, however, had to go, and in the sixteenth century it was bound to be a man of high rank. Accordingly, Philip ordered the Duke of Medina Sidonia to assume the post vacated by the death of Santa Cruz. It was quite in vain that Medina Sidonia protested that he was neither soldier not sailor; Philip had issued his orders; there was nothing for it but for his great subject, who was one of the principal, if not the most important noble in Spain, to obey. Had Philip not been what he was, an incurably stupid man, he would never have insisted on this appointment. Here was "the happy Armada," as it was called, about to start on a voyage to conquer a kingdom which counted her mariners by the thousand, sea dogs whose mettle had been tried and proved

in many a stern encounter ; and the man to hold the chief command in Philip's fleet was self-confessedly incompetent. A more amazing instance of human folly than was exhibited by that king on this occasion it would be hard to find ; all history does not provide for us a parallel case.

The task that the "happy Armada" had before it was first to clear the sea of such pestilent freebooters as Sir Francis Drake—that "el Draque" who was confidently believed by devout Spaniards to be in league with the author of all evil, whose name was invoked by Spanish mothers to frighten their naughty children—and when he, and others like unto him, had been slain and their ships destroyed, then the conquest of England itself was to be taken in hand.

To give some idea of the composition of the Armada, we will here set down the details of one division, this is—

THE FLEET OF BISCAY, COMMANDED BY DON JUAN MARTINEZ DE RECALDE, CAPTAIN-GENERAL.

Ships.	Tons.	Guns.	Mariners.	Soldiers.
St. Ann, Admiral . . .	768	30	114	323
Gangrina, Admiral . . .	1160	36	100	300
St. James	660	30	102	250
Conception of Zubelzu . .	468	20	70	100
Conception of Juan del Cavo .	418	24	70	164
Magdalena de Juan Francisca d'Ayala	330	24	70	200
St. John	350	24	80	130
Mary	165	24	100	180
Manuel	520	16	54	130
St. Mary de Monte Majore .	707	30	50	220
Mary of Aquiare . . .	70	10	23	30
Isabella	71	12	23	30
Michael de Susa . . .	96	12	24	30
St. Stephen	78	12	26	30
Totals . . .	5861	302	906	2117

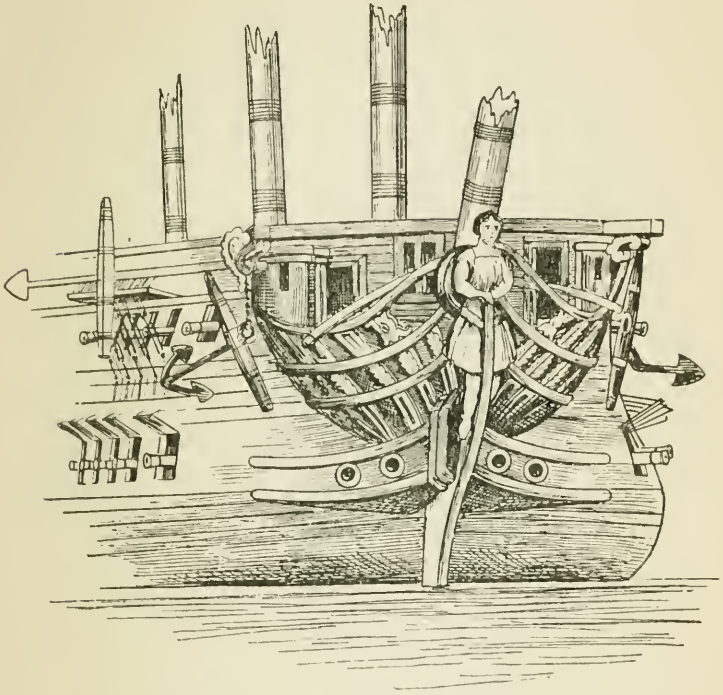
A total number of men of 3023 were thus embarked in a tonnage of 5861 ; the stowage must have been so close that they could hardly have had room to breathe. We have no room for more details here, but will give the totals of the remaining divisions of this great fleet :

Ships.		Tons.	Guns.	Soldiers.	Mariners.	Total.
The armada of Portugal under the Duke of Medina Sidonia	12	7737	347	3330	1290	4623
Armada of the galleons of Castille under Diego Flores de Valdes	16	8714	384	2458	1719	4177
Armada of ships of Andalusia under Don Pedro de Valdez	11	8762	240	2325	780	3105
Armada of the Province of Guipuzcoa under Miguel de Oquendo	12	6991	247	1992	616	2608
Armada of the Levant ships under Martin de Bertendonna	10	7705	280	2780	767	3527
Armada of hulks under Juan Gomez de Medina	23	10,271	384	3121	608	3729
Patasses and Zabras under Don Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza	22	1131	91	479	574	1093
Galeasses of Naples, under Don Hugo de Moncada	4 with 1000 rowers	290	200	873	468	1341
Galleys of Portugal under Don Diego Medrano	4 with 888 rowers	—	20	—	362	362

There were altogether — Spanish soldiers, 16,973 ; Portuguese soldiers, 2000 ; adventurers, 124 ; mariners, 8052 ; adventurers' servants, 465 ; entretenidos, 238 ; their servants, 163 ; artillerymen, 167 ; religious people of all orders, 180 ; ministers, officials, and auditors of the Treasury, 17 ; their servants, 50 ; Ministers of Justice, 19.

Paz Salas, a Spanish authority, says that the Armada consisted of 130 ships of, in round figures, 58,000 tons ; some 2400 guns, 20,000 soldiers, over 8000 mariners, and 2888 rowers, a total of nearly 30,000 men. But this

force was not nearly so formidable as it appears to be on paper. The Spaniard, to begin with, was never at his best when dealing with ships and the sea. The finest soldiers then in Europe were the Spanish infantry, but



Head of the *Invincible*, French 74-gun ship, captured 1747.

as seamen they were singularly incapable. The organisation of such a force as the Armada called for much competent administration, and that, like many other things, was lacking. The consequence was that the fleet put to sea short of water, and very soon after it sailed the provisions began to go bad. The result of

this, coupled with the bad weather that they met with at the outset, caused malignant sickness to break out on board the ships, and the men died not only in hundreds, but in thousands. The ships put back for shelter into Corunna to avoid the heavy weather; and by that time so bad was the state of things that the King was advised to delay the expedition until affairs could be put on a more satisfactory footing.

But Philip was the last man to listen to reason, and commanded them to set forth once more; and on 12th July they left Corunna fairly committed to the enterprise of the conquest of England. The English fleet to meet the Armada consisted of 34 of Her Majesty's ships, great and small, with 6705 men; 34 merchantmen with Sir Francis Drake, westward, 2294 men; 30 ships and barques paid by the city of London, 2130 men; 33 ships and barques with 15 victuallers, under the Lord Admiral, 1651 men; 20 coasters, great and small, under the Lord Admiral, paid by the Queen, 993 men; 23 voluntary ships, great and small, 1059 men; 23 coasters, under the Lord Henry Seymour, paid by the Queen, 1093 men; total, 197 ships, 15,925 men. In the *Ark*, of 800 tons and 55 guns, was Lord Howard of Effingham, Lord High Admiral of England, with 430 men. In the *Elizabeth Bonaventure*, of 600 tons, was the Earl of Cumberland. In the *Rainbow*, of 500 tons, was Lord Henry Seymour. In the *Golden Lion*, of 500 tons, was Lord Thomas Howard. In the *White Bear*, of 1000 tons, was Lord Sheffield. In the *Vanguard* was Sir William Wynter. In the *Revenge*, 500 tons, was Sir Francis Drake, Vice-Admiral. In the *Elizabeth Jones*, of 900 tons, was Sir Robert Southwell. In the *Victory*,

of 800 tons, was Sir John Hawkyns, Rear-Admiral. In the *Antelope*, of 400 tons, was Sir Henry Palmer. In the *Triumph*, of 1100 tons, was Sir Martin Frobisher, and in the *Dreadnought* was Sir George Beeston. These were the principal ships and the principal officers.

Although the total of the Englishmen engaged has been put down at over 15,000, a great many were sick; some ships had not full crews, others embarked were not really fighting men, and it is reasonable to assume that not more than 9000 were actually engaged. Although far inferior in numbers to the invaders, they were more than a match for them for two reasons: first, owing to their superior seamanship; second, owing to the fact that they were far better gunners. The proud, haughty, but unpractical Spaniard had not moved with the times; he detested guns and "villainous saltpetre," and held that hand-to-hand fighting was the only method of conflict suitable to "caballeros" such as themselves. They pinned their military faith to action by boarding, to the overwhelming of the English crews by sheer valour, by stroke of sword and push of pike. Had the English given them the chance that they desired, then it is possible that history might have taken a different course.

It was on 19th July that the Armada was sighted near the *Lizard*; and, as is well known, the high sea officers of England were playing bowls on Plymouth Hoe, on the spot where now stands the statue of Drake. When the skipper of the fishing craft arrived breathless with the news that the Spaniards were steering up Channel, Drake waved him on one side, saying that there was still plenty of time to win the game and to tackle the foe when it was finished. Then they put to

sea, each ship vying with the other to see which might have the honour to strike the first blow for England. On the 20th, Howard, the Lord High Admiral, was off the Eddystone (the rock on which the lighthouse is visible from Plymouth Hoe on a clear day; there was of course no lighthouse then) and in sight of the foe, whose fleet reached as far westward as Fowey. All the ships of the Armada had not yet come up, and Medina Sidonia, who was waiting for them, now flung out to the winds the Royal Standard of Spain at the fore, while to his maintruck he hoisted a sacred banner, which displayed a crucifix between the figures of Our Lady and Mary Magdalene.

The next morning the Lord Howard, having the wind, sent the pinnace *Disdain*—in the circumstances a happily-named craft—"to give the Duke of Medina defiance"; and then bore down in the *Ark* and engaged the Spanish commander-in-chief. So furious was his attack, so well-directed was his fire, that Sidonia had to be rescued by some of his consorts. Drake, Hawkyns, and Frobisher at the same time fell on the *Santa Anna*, that galleon of Portugal which was commanded by Juan Martinez de Recalde. So well executed was the attack on this ship that she soon gave way and endeavoured to escape to the eastward. In trying to do this she forced *Nuestra Señora del Rosario*, of 1150 tons, 46 guns, with a crew of 422 soldiers and sailors, to fall foul of another vessel. The result was that her commander, Don Pedro de Valdes, found himself without either bowsprit or foremast, and lay a helpless log upon the water. He was "with great dishonour left behind by the Duke," and his ship fell into the hands of the English. The next mis-

fortune that befell the Spaniards was an explosion of a barrel of gunpowder on board the Biscayan galleon *San Salvador*. This disaster split her decks, blew out her stern, and rendered her unmanageable by destroying the rudder. She escaped that night, being towed away by some of the rowing craft, but the next day she also, abandoned by the Duke and her consorts, fell into the hands of the English, and was eventually towed into Weymouth. The fight went on from day to day as it had been begun ; the English taking every advantage of the superior mobility of their ships, and their more skilful method of handling them ; always they declined to close and to be overwhelmed by the greater number of people of whom Sidonia disposed. Off Portland the Spaniards turned at bay and a desperate series of conflicts raged, until on the Wednesday the Admiral was compelled to send on shore for new supplies of every sort, as ammunition and provisions alike were all but exhausted.

For five days and nights now the battle had continued in calms and fluky winds ; the English sailors sometimes towing their ships into action with their long-boats, while along the coast earls and barons, Knights of the Shire and Justices of the Peace, aided and abetted by all able-bodied persons, did their best to keep the fighting men afloat supplied with those things of which they stood in need. On the Friday in this wonderful week the Lord High Admiral called on board his flagship the *Ark*, Lord Thomas Howard, Lord Sheffield, Roger Townsend, Frobisher, Hawkyns, and George Beeston, and conferred upon them the honour of knighthood. Then the wind got up and throughout this day and Saturday the Spaniards "went always before the

English army like sheep." On the Saturday evening the Armada found temporary refuge near Calais, where they anchored some two miles from the shore, hoping vainly that the English might be driven by the wind and so be to leeward and unable to get at them; but these hopes came to nothing. "In happy time it was soon espied, and prevented by bringing our fleet to an anchor also in the wind of them."

Howard had been joined by Seymour and Wynter, and his fleet now numbered 140 craft of different descriptions. The object of Medina Sidonia, now that he had failed to effect a landing in England on his own account, was to join forces with the Prince of Parma, the general of Philip's army in the Low Countries. From Calais he sent messages to the Prince imploring him to send his force over and land it in England. To this Parma made answer that no one was more anxious to invade England than was he; at the same time he wished to know how he was to get there, while the navy of that country rode everywhere triumphant in the narrow seas? Howard had the Spaniards in a trap, and we can imagine the joy with which he and his captains planned the next pleasant surprise for those weather-beaten and shot-torn galleons, which were now situated with France under their lee and the English anchored well to windward and within culverin shot of them. At midnight on that disastrous Sunday, Howard sent in eight fireships on the flood tide among the anchored ships of the Armada. The effect was that of putting an equal number of ferrets into a rabbit hole; the rabbits were obliged to leave their burrow.

There was no more terrible engine of war at this

time than the fireship; if she got home to her mark, then the fireship and her foe, wrapped in flames, were both burnt to ashes, or destroyed together by the explosion of the powder-magazine of the warship. They were not, however, very frequently successful, as, human nature being what it is, the men by whom these awful instruments of destruction were manned usually decided to leave them before they were in actual contact with any vessel of the enemy, in order to save their own lives. On this occasion the English did matters on the grand scale. They sent in no less than eight of these infernal contrivances, and, as they came along blazing to heaven, borne towards their destination by the swiftly running flood tide, the spectacle, from the point of view of the Spaniards, must have been a specially terrifying one. Huddled together in the anchorage, without form or order, were the ships of the Spanish King. To await the arrival of the fireships was to court an awful death; therefore as they approached the cables were cut, sail was made, and desperate attempts to escape were the order of the day, or rather of the night.

Naturally, in the mad effort to clear the fireships the rowing craft had a better chance than the sailing vessels; all the same the great galeasse *San Lorenzo* fell foul of another vessel and broke her rudder; she was headed for Calais and beached near that place. The longboat of the *Ark*, and the pinnace of *Margaret* and *John of London*, pursued, and 100 Englishmen flung themselves on board of her and a desperate battle raged between these sailors of Howard's fleet and the 300 soldiers who, with 450 slaves, formed the crew of the *San Lorenzo*. For long the conflict wavered in the

balance, as the assailants slipped back from the lofty sides of the galeasse in their attempts to board. At last, however, they effected a footing, the captain of the *San Lorenzo* was shot dead, the soldiers lost heart and began to leap from her sides for the shore, in which endeavour many were drowned, though some escaped to the shore with nothing worse than a wetting. Then the governor of Calais sent a message to say that the plunder belonged to the brave Englishmen who had taken the *San Lorenzo*, but that the hull of the vessel belonged to him, as "she lay on ground under his bulwarks."

The Englishmen received his message with derision and proceeded to plunder the Frenchmen by whom it was brought; the governor replied by firing his cannon at them from the walls. Eventually, however, the galeasse herself settled the matter for them, by becoming engulfed in the sands and being of no possible use to anyone.

While this spirited encounter was proceeding on Calais beach the rest of the English fleet was just as busy. Drake in the *Revenge*, Thomas Fenner in the *Nonpareil*, Hawkyns in the *Victory*, Edward Fenton in the *Mary Rose*, Beeston in the *Dreadnought*, Richard Hawkyns, son to Sir John, all sailed into the middle of their totally disorganised foes and fought them almost to a finish. The *Bonaventure*, *Rainbow*, and *Vanguard* handled one great galleon so roughly that she sank that night. Seymour and Wynter so battered the *San Felipe* and *Matteo* that they were forced to run for shelter to the coast of Flanders. Here the wild Zealanders fell upon them, captured the crews, plundered the vessels, and carried them into Flushing. The Armada was having no luck.

From nine in the morning till six in the evening did

the Spaniards experience the disciplined and controlled fury of the English sailors. Those whom they had come to attack were now the assailants; the "Invincible" Armada was nothing but a badly beaten force acting on the defensive. The Duke of Medina Sidonia did what he could; he was, on his own admission, neither sailor nor soldier, but he was a gallant Spanish gentleman determined to do all in his power for the cause in which he had been embarked. On that fatal Sunday, powder barrels exploded on board the ship of Vice-Admiral Oquendo, and her two decks and her poop were blown up. Many people were killed, more horribly burned, the ship was a wreck, and upon the following day she foundered. On the Monday the Duke collected forty-three of his best ships with which to confront the enemy; and gave orders in writing to each captain, saying that any ship "which keep not that order, or left her appointed place, that without further stay they should hang the captain of the said ship." Further, the Duke caused provost marshals to be put on board the ships with their men to carry out the sentence if it became necessary.

On 30th July, Medina Sidonia summoned the generals and Don Alonso de Leyva to consider what was best to be done; whether it were better to turn round and face the Channel—and the English—once more, or to try to escape by way of the North Sea. The council was desirous of returning by the Channel if the weather would permit. But the weather was in a wicked mood; it was breezing up from the south-south-west, and to work down Channel against the wind was more than the battered galleons were capable of accomplishing. So they continued on their now desperate and headlong

flight out into the North Sea. What their sufferings must have been is something dreadful to contemplate. They were short of water and provisions, their ammunition was all expended, their ships, even had they been in their very best trim, were not fitted to cope with the wild autumnal weather that had now set in. When we consider that added to all this there was not one of them that was not burdened with wounded and sick, for whom no provision could be made, it would seem that human suffering on board this fleet had reached the extreme limit. For many of them the agony was of short duration, as they were flung upon the inhospitable coasts of Ireland and Scotland, where any among them who succeeded in reaching the shore were immediately killed by the waiting inhabitants. Secretary Fenton relates that in a walk of less than five miles on the coast of Sligo he himself had counted "above 1100 dead corpses of men which the sea had driven on the shore."

Sir Richard Bingham, Governor of Connaught, wrote from Shrule, County Mayo: "I had intelligence sent me from my brother that the 700 Spaniards were dispatched. . . . In all 15 or 16 ships cast away on the coast of this province there hath perished at least 6000 or 7000 men, of which there have been put to the sword, first and last, by my brother George, and executed one way and another, about 700 or 800, or upwards, besides those that be yet alive. What the exact loss of the Spaniards was, no one has ever known exactly; approximately it may be put down at 63 ships, disposed of in the following manner: abandoned to the enemy, 2; lost in France, 3; lost in Holland, 2; sunk in battle, 2; wrecked in Scotland and Ireland, 19; fate unknown, 35; total, 63.

Dreadful as all this undoubtedly is, we have yet to consider what would have been the fate of England had this expedition succeeded; had the Prince of Parma and the Duke of Medina Sidonia been able to join hands and to land their forces on the coast of our country we should have been a conquered nation, we should have shared the fate of the Low Countries, and the sons and daughters of England would have perished at the hands of the familiars of the Spanish Inquisition. As it was, no Spaniard landed except as a prisoner, and from them it was learned what was to be the fate of those enemies of King Philip that the Armada had put to sea to exterminate. "They were determined to put all to the sword that should resist them, but they had no particular charge to use greater extremity to one than to another."

Thus was frustrated the great attempt to invade and to conquer England; not only was this design brought to naught, but the defeat of the Armada did much to help to break the immense power of Spain, which country had long been predominant in the councils of Europe. To the men who led, to the men who followed that lead, upon the waters of the Channel and the North Sea in that July of 1588, England is eternally indebted. Over and over again has the story been told, yet it never becomes stale by repetition; each successive narrative brings out some fresh point in this evergreen tale. Not the least pathetic part of it is the sufferings of many of our own brave seamen when they returned, ragged, starving, and ill from the chase of those who had fled in headlong rout from the majesty of their attack. "A great infection" pervaded the ships, and in the *Elizabeth Jonas* alone, out of 500 men no less than 200 perished in

the month succeeding to that in which the Armada arrived. The Lord High Admiral, in writing to Mr. Secretary Burleigh, says: "It would grieve any man's heart to see them that have served so valiantly, to die so miserably." No doubt there was mismanagement, but in this period there were no hospitals on the coasts, neither was anyone at all skilled in dealing with infectious disease.

But in all our checquered history there is nothing that stirs the blood more, even now, when over four and a quarter centuries have gone by, than this deathless feat of the Elizabethan seamen. They died in heaps, it is true, from the bullet and the sword, from drowning, hunger, thirst, cold, and disease; but their glory lives in the hearts of their grateful countrymen, and will continue to live until the last of the English folk shall have passed into the great beyond. Howard of Effingham, Lord High Admiral, Drake, Hawkyns, Frobisher, Seymour, all the list of noble names we have by heart. But also do we cherish the fame of the valour of those whose names are not written for us to read on this scroll of fame; but in memory of all those who in that campaign gave their lives for England, we may borrow those lines of Sir Francis Hastings Doyle concerning that "Private of the Buffs" who preferred to die standing erect, rather than perform the kow-tow, or act of slavish salutation, to his Eastern captors. Of the men of the Armada, of each individual of them, we can say:

"Then let his name through Europe ring,
A man of low estate:
Who died, as firm as Sparta's King,
Because his soul was great."

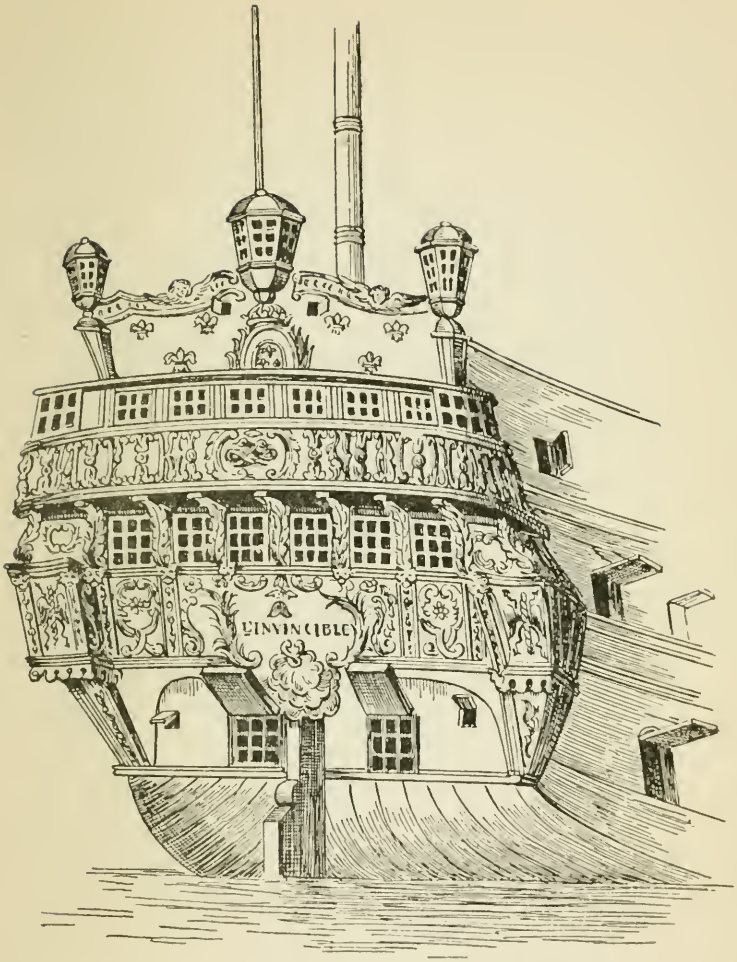
CHAPTER VI

IN WHAT MANNER ADMIRAL ROBERT BLAKE DEALT WITH THE TUNIS "PYRATS"; AND HOW SIR RICHARD STAYNER CAPTURED THE SPANISH TREASURE FLEET

Robert Blake, Admiral and General at sea, was one of England's most remarkable sea commanders. Not only was this so on account of the fights that he fought and the victories that he won, but because his career at sea did not begin until he was fifty years of age. At a time when most seamen are thinking of "coiling up their ropes," to use a phrase of their own, and of retiring to the shore after a life spent on blue water, this stout soldier took ship, and ordering his sailing masters to wheel to the right, to wheel to the left, or to form in squadron or column, he affronted the enemies of his country, and proved to all whom it might concern that whether England were ruled by King or by Commonwealth, all ships must "veil their topsails" when they met with an English man-of-war in the narrow seas. He joined the Republican Army in the year 1642—he was born in 1599—but with his career as a soldier we have no concern here. In the summer of 1649, being then fifty years of age, he was appointed to command the fleet. At this time Prince Rupert, the well-known

dashing cavalry leader and nephew of King Charles I., had also taken to the sea and had begun a system of naval war against the Parliament that was scarcely distinguishable from piracy; and it was against him and his brother Prince Maurice that the Admiral and General at sea first directed his energies. He blockaded him first in Kinsale harbour in Ireland; but a gale dispersed the Parliamentary fleet, and Rupert, taking advantage of this circumstance, slipped out and sailed for the coast of Portugal and the Straits of Gibraltar. Here he preyed upon commerce; and Blake in June 1650 was ordered to sea to hunt him down.

The General at sea did not finally start on this quest until March in the following year, when he blockaded Rupert—whose cause was supported by the King of Portugal—in the Tagus River. Here the Prince, who was a mechanical genius of no mean order, anticipated modern methods of warfare by trying to blow up his adversary with a torpedo, but without success. Blake retaliated by seizing nine merchant ships sailing out of the Tagus for Brazil with English crews on board; and we are told that he removed the officers, strengthened the crews, and converted these vessels into men-of-war; but in what manner he performed this apparent miracle we have no information, and chroniclers are silent on the subject. As the cargoes of the ships that had been captured belonged to Portuguese, the king of that country got tired of entertaining such inconvenient guests as Rupert and his brother Maurice; accordingly he requested them to leave and have it out with the General at sea in some place remote from his territorial waters. The princes got clear on 29th September 1650, and sailed



Stern of the *Invincible*, French 74-gun ship, captured 1747.

for the Straits of Gibraltar, plundering as they went. Blake, having seized the Brazil fleet sailing into the Tagus, went in pursuit. The King of Portugal, having lost two fleets of merchantmen on account of a quarrel among the English, in which he was in no way concerned, must have been devoutly thankful to see the hulls of the ships of both parties sink beneath the distant horizon.

In November, Rupert's fleet having become scattered in a gale off Cape de Gata on the Spanish coast just inside the Mediterranean, Blake came upon several detached ships and chased them into Cartagena. Here, being in a Spanish port, they deemed that they would be safe; but the General at sea had orders to treat any foreigners who afforded comfort or shelter to Rupert as enemies of his country, and in consequence drove the hunted vessels on shore and burned them on the beach of Cartagena Harbour. What the Spaniards said to this high-handed proceeding we are not told. Shortly after this the princes, with three ships, sailed for the West Indies, where the ship commanded by Maurice was lost with all hands in a hurricane. As we have no room here to follow Blake in his memorable conflicts with the Dutch in home waters, we will turn aside to some of the lesser known episodes in the life of this truly great Englishman. No one was ever more jealous of the honour of his country, no one was ever more determined, in all circumstances, to uphold the flag, to see that British subjects were supported in all their rights and privileges.

In 1654, Blake being in the Mediterranean at the time, the ruler of Tunis—whom the Admiral in his dispatch calls "the Dye," which is only another and

17th century way of spelling "Dey"—seized upon an English ship called the *Princesse*. The Algerines and the Tunisians at this date were neither more nor less than pirates; "the people of Algeria are robbers and I am their ruler," said the Dey of Algiers a few years later than the time of which we are now speaking. All was fish that came into his net or into that of his "opposite number" of Tunis. The extraordinary thing was that their villainies were tolerated so long by the European Powers. But our General at sea was not of those who suffer pirates gladly, no matter to what nationality they might belong. As soon as it came to his ears that the *Princesse* had been seized upon, he "hasted away towards Tunis directly, and somewhat sooner than did stand well with the state of our provisions at that tyme." He reached Tunis on 7th February 1654, and lost no time in sending on shore to the "Dye of Tunis" "a paper of demands for restitution of the ship *Princesse*, with satisfaction for losses and enlargement of captives according to the particular instruction, which I received for that purpose." We may be sure that Blake's demands were not couched in particularly mild language; but, all the same, he was met with the usual dilatoriness of the Eastern ruler. There were several meetings of the Tunisians with the Admiral on board his ship, but as they only talked and refused to do what he ordered, "we sailed away before Porto Farina, not farre off where theire ships of warr lay, being kept in by a party of our frigates sent thither before." It will be seen that the Admiral left nothing to chance.

But the Tunis pirates had apparently no desire to get to sea when this stern and uncompromising person

was in their waters; and upon the arrival of the English ships it was seen that all the pirate vessels had been lightened as far as possible, unrigged, drawn in as near to the shore as they could be hauled, while their guns had been landed and planted "upon diverse batteries upon the land, and a kind of campe formed, consisting of some thousands of horse and foot, as if they feared some invasion."

So formidable were the defensive works, and so small was the harbour, that Blake decided for the present not to risk the assault, as he would have "to anchor his great ships at half-muskett shot, and the port too narrow for our fleete to turn in it especially at that time." He was also so short of provisions that it was impossible to remain on this barren and inhospitable coast any longer, so he "desisted from the enterprize at that present, and sailed directly for this place, leaving the *Plimouth*, *Kent*, *Newcastle*, *Mermaid*, *Taunton*, *Foresight*, to attend that service."

The dispatch to Secretary Thurloe is dated "in the Bay of Calarie (Cagliari?), abord the *George*, 14th March 1654," and deals with various other matters, such as the capture of "a French frigat of 15 guns, but one which will beare morr;" also of the capture of "the *Percy*, an English vessel well knowne, of 30 guns." This ship (a Royalist vessel) was driven ashore at Majorca and sold to the governor of that place for 3000 dollars. But all this time Blake was not forgetting his friend the "Dye" of Tunis. He was provisioning as rapidly as possible. "Our intention is to sail hence with the first opportunity to the Bay of Tunis, to put an end to the business there, which we shall endeavour to doe with all the resolution

and circumspection which we can, as God shall direct us, it being a business of manifold concernments and interests and subject to divers consequents and constructions, of the issue thereof, with all the particular passages, I will hereafter (the Lord willing) give you an account, Sir. Your affectionate friend, ROBERT BLAKE."

The *Plimouth* and her consorts must have had a hungry time on the coast of Tunis until the return of their Admiral; but one of the disagreeables of sea life was then, and for two centuries later, a state of semi-starvation when any long time elapsed in the passage from port to port. At last the Admiral got to sea again, but was greatly delayed by contrary winds, which he described as "the stopp which hath been put upon us by contrary and stormy winds." When he got back to Tunis "we found them more wilful and untractable than before, adding to their obstinacy much insolence and contumely, denying us all commerce and civility, and hindering all others as much as possible from the same. These barbarous provocations did soe far worke uppon our spirits, that we judg'd it necessary for the honour of the fleet, our nation and religion, seeing they would not deal with us as friends, to make them feel us as enemyes; it was thereupon resolved at a council of warre to endeavour the fireing of their ships in Porto Farina."

Acting on this decision the fleet put to sea, and arrived off Porto Farina on 3rd April in the afternoon. The next morning, very early, "the Lord being pleased to favour us with a gentle gale off the sea," they weighed their anchors and stood in to the harbour, anchoring "before their castles." Blake's plan was to destroy the pirate fleet, which, as has been said, was dismantled and

secured as near to the shore as possible. While the ships engaged the castles, each vessel sent out a long-boat armed and manned by picked men, whose duty it was to fire the pirate craft inshore. With a loss of twenty-five men killed, this service was satisfactorily performed "after some hours' dispute," as the dispatch says. The enemy's ships to the number of nine were thus destroyed, and the fleet then worked out of the harbour. Immediately afterwards the weather changed and became stormy, "soe that we could not have effected the business, had not the Lord afforded that nick of time in which it was done." At the conclusion of his narration of these events Blake becomes almost apologetic for what he had done. "I confess," he says, "that in contemplation of some seeming ambiguity in my instructions I did awhile much hesitate myselfe and was ballanced in my mind until the barbarous carriage of those pyrats did turne the scale." It must have been an altogether unpleasant surprise for "those pyrats," as their insolence was based upon the impossibility of any ships ever entering their harbour. "Here are the castles of Guletta and Porto Farina," had the "Dye of Tunis" said to the General at sea; "you may do your worst, we do not fear you."

Blake was only one of the many valiant sea commanders who served his country so well at this time; and we will now turn to an exploit of one of his captains which took place a year and a half after the discomfiture of the "pyrats" of Tunis. In September 1655 an English fleet was cruising off the coast of Spain in the neighbourhood of Cadiz, but at the time of the episode with which we are concerned, most of the ships had

gone off to the coast of Portugal to obtain provisions and water, leaving behind them a small squadron of six or seven ships. These were under the command of Captain (afterwards Sir Richard) Stayner, whose pennant was flying from "*Speaker* frigot" (we have to take our spelling as we find it in seventeenth century dispatches!). Captain Stayner was keeping an eye on the entrance to Cadiz Bay, and approaching that port from the West Indies was the King of Spain's treasure fleet, consisting of four ships of war and three merchant vessels, richly laden with gold, silver, pearls, and other merchandise of the most valuable description. In "A true narrative of the late success which it hath pleased God to give to some part of the fleet of the Commonwealth upon the Spanish coast against the King of Spain's West India fleet," the ships are thus described:

"The Admiral Don Marquis Del Porto, General.

"Vice-Admiral, a Gallion, Don Francisco de Esqueval, Commander.

"The Rear-Admiral, a Gallion, Don Francisco del Hayo, Commander.

"A ship commanded by Captain John Rodriguez Caldron.

"A ship commanded by Captain John de la Torre.

"Another small man-of-war and a vessel of advice (*Aviso*, a dispatch vessel) from the Viceroy of Mexico to the King of Spain."

This fleet was fifty-eight days out, and had, unfortunately for themselves, "in the way betwixt the Western Islands and Mazagam in Africk, seized upon a small Portugal as a prize." Whether the captain of "the small Portugal" gave the information to the Spaniards,

out of revenge for having been captured, we shall never know; but he certainly informed them that the Spaniards had beaten the English off their coast a month before; so they sailed on confidently for the haven to which they were bound with quiet minds, anticipating no disaster.

On 8th September, "plying to sea being driven thither by a strong westerly wind," Captain Stayner "did at the evening of the day discover the said Spanish fleet five or six leagues to the westward of Cadiz; and the approach of night denying opportunity of present action, they endeavoured to fall in with them the next day, which accordingly they did about nine o'clock in the morning."

The Spaniards, it appears, took no alarm, as they imagined Stayner's fleet "to be fisher boats," and it is evident that for some reason or other those on board the treasure fleet thought that they were in no danger. It had been blowing hard during the night, and Stayner's fleet had, with the exception of his own ship, the *Speaker*, the *Bridgwater*, and the *Plimouth*, been driven so far to leeward that they could not get up in time to join in the attack on the Spanish fleet. Stayner would not wait for his consorts, but "ingaged with the fleet, and a sharp dispute there was betwixt them." The flag of the Spanish admiral being hoisted on a small ship, the English frigates disregarded her, thinking that no Admiral would sail in so inconsiderable a vessel; and accordingly this warrior, apparently not liking the look of things, escaped into Cadiz Bay, where for some unaccountable reason she was run on shore and sunk; "it being reported to have in her 600,000 pieces of eight.

The ship of the Vice-Admiral was of enormous value; in her were 600,000 pieces of eight, "besides jewels and plate upon the accompt of the Marquis of Badex to the value of 500,000 pieces of eight."

The Vice-Admiral, being cut off, had no chance but to fight or surrender, and he fought bravely for six hours. At the expiration of this period he hauled down his colours; but before possession could be taken of the ship she was set on fire by the Spaniards and burned to the water's edge and sank. "In her were destroyed one hundred and ten men, the principal of whom was the Marquis of Badex, who with his wife and daughter were burnt. The ship of the Rear-Admiral was taken; but as the report does not mention that she had any treasure on board, we can conclude that she was a comparatively valueless capture. Stayner and his men certainly seem to have had bad luck on this occasion as far as prize money was concerned. The Admiral escaped, the Vice-Admiral's ship was burned; then the vessel commanded by Captain John[1] Rodriguez Caldron was captured, and she also caught fire, or was fired by her crew, and utterly destroyed. She was said to have had in her money and jewels to the value of 600,000 pieces of eight. The ship of de la Torre, which was laden with hides and sugar, was taken and remained in the hands of her captors, while "the small man-of-war" escaped into Gibraltar. However, if little but glory came to those mariners of England by whom this victory was won, the loss to the enemy was enormous.

"The value of what is taken and possessed is not justly known," says "a true narrative of the late success," "but by the calculation of the Spaniards there are taken

and lost about 9,000,000 pieces of eight, besides the said ships and their lading. There are many prisoners taken, 350 being found in the Rere-Admiral and about 90 saved out of the Vice-Admiral, among whom are the eldest son, a younger son, and two daughters of the said Marquis (besides a childe); as also Don Diego de Villa Alva, the Governor of Havanna, and several others of quality and Spanish merchants. And as all this was done without the loss of one vessel of the English, so it pleased the wisdom of God to chuse to effect so great a work by a little force, as also by suffering the enemy to be foolishly ensnared into a presumptuous confidence by an enemy's information [this, of course, was the "small Portugal"], on which they so relyed that they neglected the haling of a vessel which came from St. Lucar and might have informed them of the truth."

Information both ashore and afloat was not always strictly accurate in the seventeenth century; and for news from an ambassador to his government the following extract from a letter of Mynheer Borrel, the Dutch Ambassador in Paris, would be hard to equal. He wrote to the States-General on 22nd January 1656, four months after the destruction of the treasure fleet off Cadiz by Stayner: "Here is news from Spain. That the English fleet under Admiral Blake, being arrived in the Bay of Cadiz and afterwards at Gibraltar, an agreement was there made with them by the commissaries from the court of Spain that the said English fleet should go in the Spanish service, receiving for the same . . . . (£ ?) per month." It seems impossible that any person in the position of an Ambassador could have been so credulous and so foolish, especially when he

must have known the furious hatred that then existed between England and Spain.

We have said that the Spanish fleet mistook the frigates of Captain Stayner for "fisher boats"; and although this seems almost impossible to believe, we still have to recollect that ships of war in those days were not very large. The dimensions of men-of-war in the seventeenth century may be given here.

First Rate, *Britannia*, built at Chatham by the most famous naval architect of his day, Sir Phineas Pett. She was 1620 tons, and carried when in home waters 100 guns; when abroad, 90 guns. Her length was 146 feet; beam (or breadth), 47 feet; depth of hold, 19 feet; draught of water aft, 24 feet. There was at this time a very curious regulation with regard to the number of men and guns carried by the man-of-war. Thus, in the *Britannia* in times of peace at home, 605 men were carried; in time of war at home she increased her complement to 710 men; but if she were ordered abroad it went up to 815. To the sailorman of the present day "the everlasting miracle remains" of where in a ship of these dimensions 815 men were stowed away. One thing is perfectly certain, that the unhealthiness from which these old-time vessels suffered so terribly was due very largely to overcrowding.

Before we go any further with the ships of the same date as the *Britannia* we will set down the figures for Nelson's famous ship the *Victory*, which was built almost exactly one hundred years after the *Britannia*. She was built from the design of Sir Thomas Slade at Chatham Dockyard, and launched on 7th May 1765; her dimensions are as follows: length from figurehead

to taffrail, 226 feet 6 inches; length of keel, 151 feet 3 inches; length of gun deck, 186 feet; extreme beam, 52 feet; depth of hold, 21 feet 6 inches; tonnage, 2162. Her armament in 1778 was: On lower deck, thirty long 32-pounders; on middle deck, thirty 24-pounders; on main deck, thirty-two 12-pounders; on upper deck, twelve short 12-pounders; total, 104 guns. In 1793 she had four 32-pounder carronades substituted on upper deck and six 18-pounder carronades were added on poop, making her total number of guns at this time 110. The six last were subsequently removed, as at Trafalgar she had no guns on the poop. In 1803 two 65-pounder carronades were placed on the forecastle instead of 32-pounders, when the weight of the broadside fired from fifty-two guns was 1160 lb.[1] We may here remark that the weight of the broadside of the French battleship *Lyon*, now building, will be 23,000 lb. in weight, or almost exactly twenty times as great. It is not generally known that the name "carronade," as applied to cannon for use on board men-of-war, came from the place at which they were made, the Carron ironworks in the south of Scotland.

But to return to our seventeenth century men-of-war. The Second Rate *Harwich* was built by Isaac Bets at Harwich. Her tonnage was 1462; length, 142 feet; beam, 44 feet; depth of hold, 18 feet; and draught of water aft, 18 feet. Her complement in time of peace at home was 500 men; in time of war at home, 580; in time of war abroad, 660. In time of war at home she carried 90 guns; war abroad, 82 guns.

[1] Details concerning *Victory* are from Commander Wharton's *History of H.M.S. Victory*.

Third Rate, *The Anne*, was built from the designs of Phineas Pett at Chatham. Her tonnage was 1089; length, 128 feet; beam, 40 feet; depth of hold, 17 feet, and draught of water aft, 18 feet. In time of peace at home her complement was 300; war at home, 380; war abroad, 460. She carried 70 guns during war at home; 62 for war abroad.

Fourth Rate, *Adventure*, built by Pett at Woolwich; 392 tons; length, 92 feet; beam, 27 feet 9 inches; depth of hold, 12 feet; draught of water aft, 14 feet; complement, 120 men for peace at home; 160 for war at home; 190 for war abroad. She carried 48 guns in home waters, and 42 when sent on foreign service.

Fifth Rate, *Dartmouth*, was built from the designs of John Tippets at Portsmouth; 266 tons; length, 80 feet; beam, 25 feet; depth of hold, 10 feet; draught of water aft, 12 feet; complement, peace at home, 90; war at home, 115; abroad, 135. Guns, 32 at home and 28 abroad.

Sixth Rate, *Drake*, was built at Deptford by Peter Pett; 146 tons; length, 38 feet; beam, 12 feet; depth of hold, 7 feet 8 inches; draught of water aft, 9 feet; complement, 45, 65, 75; guns, 16 at home and 14 abroad. There were, in addition to these six classes of rated ships, "Hulkes, Fireships, Yachts, Ketches, Hoys, which carried 5 men. Smacks, which carried 2. Sloopes, manned by 4 sailors." There were also "Prizes from Barbary": *Two Lyons*, *Golden Horse*, *Halfmoon*, *Rose of Sally* (this was the port on the Atlantic coast of Morocco from which the much-dreaded Rovers of Sallee issued and carried on their piratical warfare against the ships of all nations), *Rose of Algier* (Algiers was another

piratical stronghold which endured until the place was finally destroyed by Lord Exmouth in 1816), *Dumbarton* Argile's prize, *Heldenburgh*, and Monmouth's ship.

For the manning of these various vessels the following was the scale of pay, and, considering the hardships that every man who went to sea underwent, it cannot be said that they erred at all on the side of generosity: A captain of a first rate got 15 shillings a day; a lieutenant, 3 shillings; a master got £7 a month, and a boatswain £4; the yeoman of the sheets got £1, 12s.; the gunner, £4; the quartermaster got £1, 6s.; the carpenter, £4; ordinary or crew, £1, 6s.; while the services of the "chyrurgeon"[1] were only rated at £2, 10s., and his "mate" got £1, 10s.; the purser got £4; the trumpeter, £1, 10s.; cook, £1, 5s.; the armourer and the gunsmith got the same. The yeoman of the powder, the cook's mate, the coxswain's mate, the swabber, and the cooper rejoiced in £1, 4s. per month, while the ordinary seaman, shifter, and barber were remunerated with 19 shillings. What the shifter did does not appear, and there is another and equally mysterious person, known as "the gromet at sea," who got 14s. 3d. The boy got 6d., not an extavagant wage for the month's work that a boy was doubtless expected to put in at this time.

We have of course to remember that in the middle of the seventeenth century a pound was worth at least two and a half to three times as much as it is to-day; but even taking this into consideration, the salaries that we have here set down cannot be considered as excessive.

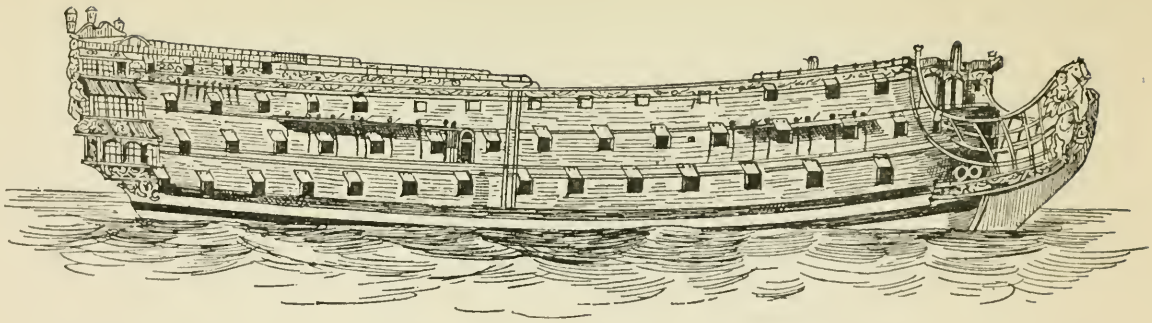
[1] Doctor or surgeon.

CHAPTER VII

BUCCANEERS OF THE SPANISH MAIN—HOW PIERRE LE GRAND TOOK A SPANISH GALLEON—A PIRATE'S EPITAPH

THERE is a grim and terrible significance in the word "pirate," and although the deeds of these outlaws of the seas have a certain fascination in them, they were as a rule but sorry villains who preyed on the weak and defenceless, pursuing their nefarious careers and plying their butcherly trades with a most abandoned cruelty. We have dealt at some length with the pirates who were the scourge of the Mediterranean for so many centuries, and we will now turn our attention to those, perhaps better known to the general reader, who operated in the West Indies, on the mainland and among the islands.

In 1654, Jamaica was captured by Penn and Venables, and from that date until the peace of Ryswick in 1697 the buccaneers, as the pirates of the Spanish Main came to be called, were at the height of their maleficent activity. Whatever blame, however, is to be meted out to these sea rovers must be shared by all nationalities alike, as twenty-nine years before the English and French, owing to the increasing value of trade in these waters, planted a colony side by side in the island of St. Kitts. This venture proved very successful, and the English also occupied the adjacent island of Nevis. In 1629 a



The *Royal George*, built in the reign of George II. This ship sank at Spithead on 29th August 1782, having been inclined for the purpose of repairing a water-pipe passing through the side, below the water-line. Nearly 1200 persons were at that time on board. Of these, Admiral Kempenfeldt and some 900 others were drowned.

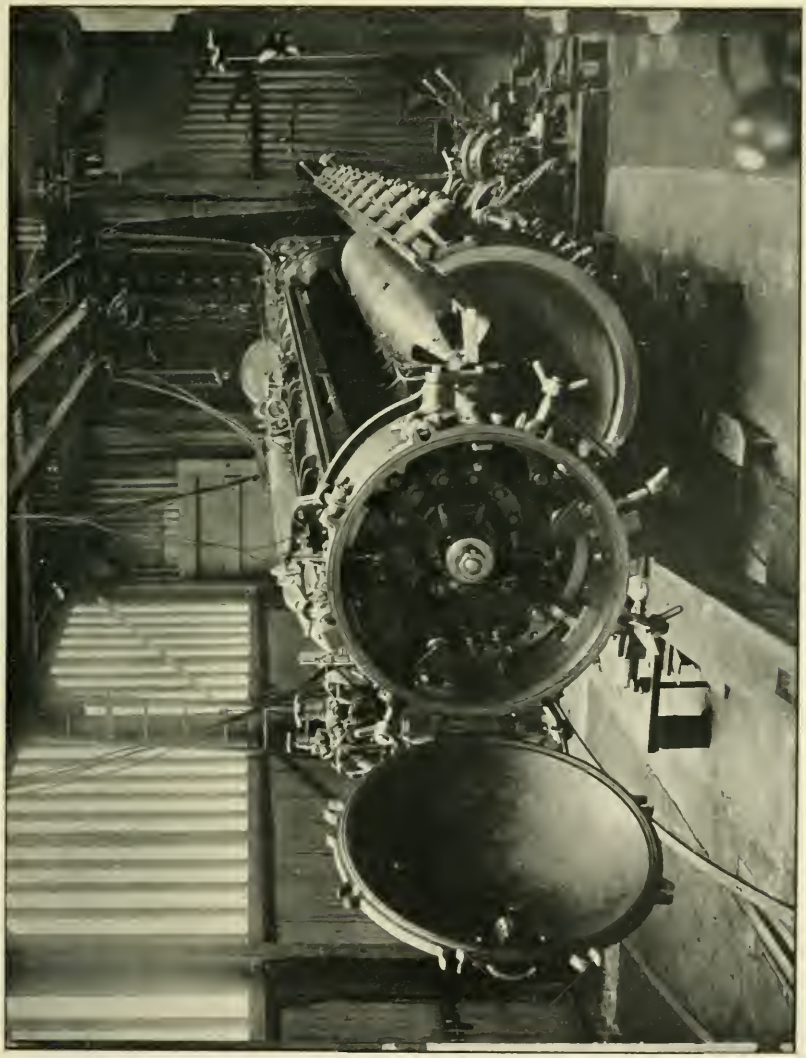
Spanish fleet swooped down on these now flourishing colonies and destroyed them utterly with fire and sword. When, therefore, the English acquired Jamaica and made of it a strong place of arms, reprisals were the order of the day. The buccaneer was the product of his age, and derived his name from the French word *boucanier*, used to denominate the men who made a livelihood in the island of Hispaniola by killing the wild cattle which there abounded, and curing the meat by the boucan process, which consisted in laying it upon boucans (or gratings constructed of green sticks) and exposing it to the smoke of wood, fed with fat, bones, and offal of the carcase and trimmings of the hide. This work was the hardest imaginable, and none but the roughest and strongest of the old-time pioneers could stand the inevitable hardships involved. When, therefore, a piratical enterprise was afoot, with its promise of unlimited booty, who so handy for the work as the desperate hunters whose motto was ever "a short life and a merry one."

In the days of which we speak the Spaniard was the enemy, and against him English, Dutch, and French combined; the buccaneers indulging in a sort of private war against the subjects of His Most Catholic Majesty the King of Spain. When that potentate complained of their depredations, the King of England replied "that such men did not commit those acts of hostility and piracy as subjects of His Majesty, and therefore His Catholic Majesty might proceed against them as he thought fit." The King of France said the same thing, and added "that he had no fortress or castle in Hispaniola, neither did he receive one farthing of tribute therefrom."

To the reputable and disreputable mariners who frequented the Spanish Main at this time, there were added in 1661 a new class of colonist. In that year powers were given to Justices of the Peace "to dispose of felons condemned to death for small offences, single men and women found to be sturdy beggars, and loose disorderly people, by sending them to the plantations." About the same time proposals were made for better accommodating the plantations with servants, and for "constituting an office for transporting thence vagrants, rogues, and all idle persons, felons, vagabonds, gipsies, and loose persons who remain here noxious and unprofitable." It seems rather hard on the plantations that all the noxious and unprofitable should be sent out to keep company with respectable persons, but so long as the Justices got rid of these people they were indifferent whither they went.

It will be seen from the list we have set down, that of desperate characters there was no lack from which to choose; and the West Indies swarmed with felons, jail-birds, proscribed men, refugees—every sort of individual, in fact, whom misconduct or ill-luck had banished from his native shores. These men could make their living in but very few ways; there was the calling of the mariner, and there was that of the boucanier, in both of which there was no chance but to obtain a bare living wage for an almost unendurable existence. Being what they were, and being where they were, is it to be wondered at that they flocked to the standard of the skull and cross-bones, the life beneath which flag, if it meant desperate toil and terrible danger, still offered the compensation of booty

PLATE XII.



TORPEDO TUBE OF SUBMARINE. TORPEDO IN TUBE ON RIGHT OF PICTURE.

to be spent in that wild debauchery which was the only form of pleasure that they knew?

It is somewhat of a strain on the imagination to picture the lives led by the buccaneers. To us it is all so remote, so fantastic, the idea of men whose whole lives were passed in scenes of horror and bloodshed; who knew of no home save the stifling 'tween decks of a piratical craft; who were bereft of kindred; whose frames were iron, and whose hearts were as cold as chilled steel; whose recompense for all the hideous privations which they underwent was mad license that left them bankrupt in purse and shattered in health. Very naturally, he who aspired to lead these wild spirits must have possessed some touch of greatness, some of that incommunicable gift of leadership which impressed itself upon his fellows. Stained as they were by crimes so horrible that the gorge rises at the very recital of them, we cannot for all that withhold some meed of admiration for the leaders of the buccaneers. Pierre le Grand, Alexandre, Montbars the exterminator, Bartolomeo Portuguez, Michael le Basque, Roche Braziliano, Lewis Scott (who took Campeachy), John Davis (who plundered Nicaragua), Van Horn, Gramont de Graaf (who in 1683 sacked Vera Cruz), Mansfeldt (who in 1664 designed the forming of an independent buccaneer state with a government and a flag of its own), and last, and greatest of all, Sir Henry Morgan (who took Panama), were all men who, in a time of turbulence unparalleled, rose to the summit of the piratical profession. Their names alone serve to show us of what diverse nationality they were; and if they differed, as all men must differ, they were alike in that one supreme

attribute of courage, which counted more than for aught else in the times in which they lived.

John Esquemeling was a servant of the West India Company of France, and as such was sold to the governor of Tortuga, as was apparently the custom of the day. He set sail from Havre de Grace in the year 1666, and found that he had decidedly not bettered his condition, as he was treated with so much cruelty by his new master that he fell dangerously ill. Fearing that he would die, the governor sold him to the surgeon for seventy pieces of eight. He recovered, and was given his liberty on condition of his paying one hundred pieces of eight when he was in a position to do so. Being now at liberty he decided, he says, "to enter with the wicked order of the pirates or robbers of the sea." This he did, and remained with them until 1672. This circumstance would have been unimportant had it not been for the fact that this obscure pirate was a man of education, with a considerable literary gift. He wrote his experiences in Dutch, and the book was translated into English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. The preface of the English edition—by the English translator—is decidedly quaint, as his admiration for the feats of the buccaneers is by no means tempered by horror at their atrocities. He says:

"We have here half the book filled with the unparalleled, if not inimitable, adventures and heroic exploits of our own countrymen and relations" (it will be seen that he even claims kinship with the buccaneers), "whose undaunted and exemplary courage when called upon by king and country we ought to emulate. The author, though a stranger to our nation,

yet with that candour and fidelity has recorded our actions as to render the metal of English valour to be more believed and feared abroad than if those things had been divulged by ourselves at home. From thence, peradventure, will other nations learn that the English people are of their genius more inclinable to act than to write, seeing they as well as we have lived unacquainted with these actions of our nation until such time as a foreign author to our country came to tell them."

Considering the fact that the buccaneers and all their ways and works had been specifically disavowed by the King of England, the touch about "when called upon by their king and country" savours decidedly of the comic!

The pirates of the Spanish Main proceeded on early Christian principles in one respect; that is to say, they had all things in common, and all salaries and remunerations were decided upon before setting out on a cruise. The captain, shipwright, and surgeon all enjoyed fixed salaries; the crew were paid according to the success of the expedition. There was also a graduated scale for all wounds and injuries received, which was as follows: right arm, six hundred pieces of eight or six slaves; right leg, five hundred pieces of eight or five slaves; left arm, the same; left leg, four hundred pieces of eight or four slaves; one eye, one hundred pieces of eight or one slave; finger, the same; all to be taken out of the common stock gained by piracy. The division was made in shares; the captain received six times the share of a seaman, the other officers in proportion to the importance of their services.

The value of the piece of eight varied; but we find in Pepys' *Diary* for 11th May 1663, that he records his disputing with Sir G. Carteret as to whether the piece of eight was worth 4s. 3d. or 4s. 5d. Speaking of the money current in these latitudes at this time, we find that the pistole was worth £1, 3s. 9d., and the doubloon was worth two pistoles, or £2, 7s. 6d.

That there was hatred deep and bitter between the Spaniards and the English in the seventeenth century in the West Indies is undeniable, and the embers of the flames kindled by Philip II. of Spain and his Invincible Armada still blazed up fiercely at the least provocation. The warfare between Spaniard and Englishman at this date and in these latitudes had nothing in it of a national character, however, except in so far as the French and the English joined hands to despoil the Spaniard. In the history of the buccaneers the Spaniard as a rule was fighting for what he had got, while the Frenchman and the Englishman were fighting to despoil him of what they considered to be his ill-gotten gains. There is one thing which stands out prominently in the annals of the buccaneers, which is, that the feats they performed were so incredible that it is lucky they have been set down by an eye-witness, or no one would be found to give them credit.

Somewhere about the middle of the seventeenth century—the exact date cannot be given—there floated on the bosom of the waters off Cape Tiburon, on the western shore of the island of Hispaniola, a great Spanish galleon, having on board a Vice-Admiral of Spain. The tropic night had fallen, and in the carved and gilded saloon underneath her poop the Vice-Admiral, with a company of officers and highly placed persons, sat

at his wine. Some played cards, others speculated vaguely on the length of the voyage just begun; everything on board indicated the peace and security likely to obtain on a great ship which flew the proud banner of Leon and Castille. She carried three tiers of guns, so mounted that they could be fired right ahead and astern as well as on the broadside, and her company numbered at least 150 men. It was a dark night, with a rhythmic swell which caused the vessel to roll slightly; as she did so the heavy yards groaned in their slings, and the hull was filled with the strange creaking noises so well known to those who have sailed the seas in ships built of wood. If there were a watch on deck that night, they were asleep; for what harm could come to them in a stark calm in sight of their own island of Hispaniola? They had reckoned without the sea wolves, who in those early days had made but few demonstrations of their powers, and whose exploits so far had been confined to the capture of unfortunate mariners who were in no case to offer a stout defence. These had their ships rifled, and they themselves had been made to walk the plank; but the fate of such as they did not disturb the Vice-Admiral at his bottle or the card-players at their game.

Pierre le Grand had been out for ten days; he had sailed in an undecked boat from an obscure coast port with the object of some safe and easy capture which would mean present wealth to himself and the twenty-eight men and the surgeon by whom he was accompanied. But one blazing day had followed another, and no sail had risen above the horizon to gladden the straining eyes of the slowly famishing crew; for they had but a bare six days' provisions aboard when they

started ; half had given place to quarter rations ; and now, many, many miles from port, grim starvation stared them in the face. The last drop of water had been served out just at sunset, and as this was being done the great Spanish galleon hove in sight. Pierre knew her for the *Madre de Dios*, and that she was conveying great wealth to Spain ; but he was also aware that an attack on her would be almost—if not quite—the act of a madman. Desperation, however, is the mother of mad deeds, and the case was desperate indeed. Long before Pierre and his crew could hope to reach any port friendly enough in which to revictual, they would be dead of hunger ; another day and they would have lost their senses from thirst. There was but one decision to take, and Pierre —veritably "le Grand" on this occasion— took the bold course.

Far away in the east a sickle moon hung in the sky over the distant peaks of Hispaniola ; but it was too faint even to temper the blackness of that breathless tropic night. Crouched over the tiller of his boat, Pierre conferred long and anxiously with the surgeon, while his men rested idly on their oars.

At last the muttered colloquy ended and Pierre spoke aloud :

"Is it not that we starve, messieurs?" There came an answering growl of assent. "We perish with thirst ; is that not so?" Again the hoarse indistinguishable murmur. "Vaya, there is but one way out of our troubles —we must take yonder galleon." There was a gasp of stupefied astonishment, as indeed there might well be. "She carries three tiers of guns," said one. "There are on board of her one hundred and fifty men at least,"

wailed another. "We shall be food for the Inquisition," objected a third. "Silence," came the strong voice of the master-spirit, "and attend to me. All that you have said is true; it may be even less than the truth. But what did I, Pierre, promise to you all when we set out? That I would lead you to where great booty was to be had. But did I not say from the first that I wanted none who were not prepared to fight for that which they coveted? Is not this truth?" "It was so; you said it," came back the answer. "Therefore," the voice proceeded emphatically from the dark, "choose your fate: either decide to make one great effort and take the Admiral's ship, or die—as ye otherwise will die —of thirst and of hunger. I have said."

There fell a silence as of the grave; of that grave which seemed to yawn so widely for these desperadoes whichever way they might turn. And then one spoke. "I have no more holes in my belt, they are all taken up. Also, I would give a handful of doubloons for a drink of muddy water; there is wine on board the galleon, and I—I would sooner die by the pistol or the knife than rot in this accursed boat." "And you others?" came the voice from the sternsheets. "We also," was the response.

Pierre drew a deep breath of relief; he knew that could he but string them up to the fighting pitch in their present desperate plight, there were no odds that would stop them. They fought to escape the Inquisition, the tortures and the dungeons of Spain, as well as for that hope of gain with which they were always animated. He made no outward manifestation of feeling, however, but gave an order that the oars should be muffled.

This was instantly obeyed, some of the men tearing up their shirts for the purpose, remarking that either they would never want shirt more, or else the crew of the galleon could supply all deficiencies.

Slowly and rythmically did the galleon swing back and forth on the oily windless swell; the masts creaked in their steps; the heavy yards ground noisily in their slings; the thick hempen rigging slackened and tautened as she rolled. Under her high forecastle the watch slept, and on the poop ladder the officer of the watch nodded and dozed. Nearer and nearer crept the sea wolves in their miserable boat with which to combat this monster of the deep; very quietly they rowed, almost holding their breath, for Pierre wanted them fresh and strong for that mad rush over the bulwarks by which alone they could hope for surprise and success. In the carved and gilded cabin the Admiral and his company drank their wine and played their cards with that high seriousness becoming to such noble caballeros.

Hernando Cortes, as we all know, burnt his ships in order that none among his company should have any means of escape should they so desire. It is unlikely that Pierre le Grand had ever heard of the conqueror of Mexico, for book-learning was far to seek among the desperadoes of the Spanish Main; therefore the action which he now took was probably quite original on his part. The boat was nearing her antagonist now, and Pierre again held a muttered colloquy with the surgeon, who was a man of gigantic size and strength. As the leader ceased speaking the surgeon stood up in the stern-sheets of the boat; in one hand he held a huge wooden mallet.

"Listen once more, my children," came the strong voice of Pierre in hushed tones. "To-night no man shall go back"; he half turned his head to the surgeon and uttered one more word: "Strike." The surgeon hove the mallet high above his head, and then through the darkness came the sound of a dull rending crash: with one blow he had stoved the boat's planking at the waterline. Next moment Pierre had stuffed his jacket into the hole through which the water was already pouring. Now only a short hundred yards separated the boat from the galleon, but such was their amazing good fortune that even yet they were undiscovered. With oars double banked the frail and sinking craft tore through the intervening space as fast as human muscles could send her.

Pierre had deferred his final stroke, that of disabling the boat, till the last moment. There could be no repining now; all that remained for the sea wolves was to conquer or die. They actually got alongside and were over the bulwarks before anyone was aware of their vicinity; indeed, so unexpected was the attack that had they literally dropped from the skies the surprise could not have been more complete.

The surgeon, still grasping the mallet, was first over the side, and alighted almost at the feet of the officer of the watch, who dozed on the ladder leading to the poop. The mallet swung high in the air, and the next moment the brains of the luckless man were scattered on the quarterdeck. The watch on deck—or, to speak more correctly, the watch that should have been on deck—roused from their slumbers by the ferocious yells of the pirates, stumbled forward to inevitable death; unarmed,

they fell before the knives and pistols of their pitiless foes, and in less time than it takes to tell the tale the upper deck was converted into a shambles. More sleep-dazed men came struggling to the main hatch, to be met with knife and sword, with pistol and club ; they were beaten down from whence they came, falling in ghastly heaps at the foot of the companion. Then the hatch itself was found, and they were imprisoned below. An attempt to rush the forehatch met with a similar repulse from the deck, and then that avenue of death was also closed from above. Into the sumptuous cabin of the Admiral dashed Pierre with his faithful surgeon and three others at his heels. At an outrage so unparalleled as for any one to enter those sacred precincts uninvited and unannounced, the captain rose, filled with cold fury. "By all the Saints . . ." he began, "what is the meaning of this?"

But the pistol which Pierre held in his left hand was fired full in his face at a foot's range, and his all but headless corpse fell over the card-table. All started to their feet, but they were covered by the pistols of their assailants, and one by one recognised that their case was hopeless. They were led on deck and pinioned. The sea wolves were victorious; they had taken the galleon of Spain, a feat which would be absolutely incredible if it did not happen to be true. In all the blood-stained annals of the Spanish Main this feat of arms stands by itself; not even the capture of Panama by Sir Henry Morgan trenches so closely on the realm of the impossible, and he who carried it out was rightly named "Pierre le Grand."

Among the buccaneers of this period we can as a

rule trace a great similarity. They fought for booty and slaves; and if they returned in triumph laden with spoil, the doubloons, the pistoles, and the pieces of eight were spent in violent and reckless debauchery, which left them, as we have said before, bankrupt in health and pocket. But of such folly as this, Pierre le Grand was incapable. All we know of him is that he landed as many of the Spaniards as he could, retaining only sufficient on board to assist him and his men to work the galleon home to European waters. These he reached in safety, and then, as far as is known, abandoned the profession of piracy and settled down to live a respectable life. We who live in the comfortable security of the most peaceful of centuries have no sympathy with the methods, the ways, and the works of the adventurers of that bygone age. But even we can admit that if ever a bold buccaneer was justified of his prey, it was the man of whom we have written.

Of all those men whose names have come down to us as pirates in the West Indies there are scarcely any who did not come to a violent end at the conclusion of their careers. This makes the escape of Pierre all the more remarkable; he made one great coup and then disappeared for ever from the scene of his crime. He is the only pirate who ever succeeded in taking by boarding a large and well-manned ship of war. Here we have no space to deal with the others; but the epitaph written at the time of the death of one of the pirate leaders, who was known as L'Ollonais—because he came from the district in France known as "Les Sables d'Olonne"—may very well stand for all the rest. After a career of cruelty, hard to beat even among his compeers in the

West Indies, and which included his personally hacking to pieces a captive in front of the rest, and of tearing a man's heart from his living body and fixing his teeth in it, he himself came to an entirely appropriate end. The Indians at Darien tore him in pieces alive, threw his limbs one by one into a fire, and then scattered his ashes in the air. "Thus ends the history of the life and miserable death of that infernal scoundrel L'Ollonais; who, full of horrid, execrable, and enormous deeds, and also debtor to so much innocent blood, died by cruel and butcherly hands, such as his own were in the course of his life."

It was thus that the pirate was judged by those who lived at the same time as himself; and this judgment does not err on the side of severity.

INSTANTANEOUS PHOTOGRAPH OF THE STRIKING OF A "KRUPP CEMENTED" ARMOUR PLATE BY A 380-POUND ARMOUR PIERCING SHELL FROM A 9·2 GUN.

PLATE XIII.

CHAPTER VIII

"WHEN HAWKE CAME SWOOPING FROM THE WEST"

During the whole of the eighteenth century war between England and France and England and Spain was almost perpetual. Occasionally treaties would be made and peace proclaimed, then some fresh grievance would be discovered on the one side or the other and war would break out again. In 1704, Rooke took Gibraltar; in 1743, Anson captured *Nuestra Señora del Caba Donga* with his famous ship the *Centurion*, and brought home booty taken out of her amounting in value to one and a quarter millions of pounds sterling. In 1757, Clive and Admiral Watson took Calcutta; Pocock fought three actions with the French in Indian waters; and in 1758, at the instigation of a Quaker of the name of Cumming, who, having an intimate knowledge of the French settlements on the coast of Africa, suggested to Pitt the idea of driving them out and appropriating their settlements for our own use, Marsh and Keppel seized upon Goree; while in the same year Admiral Boscawen and General Amherst captured Cape Breton, Louisburg, and the Isle of St. John. These are only a few of the occurrences during this war-like period, which happened during the first half of the century, and which not

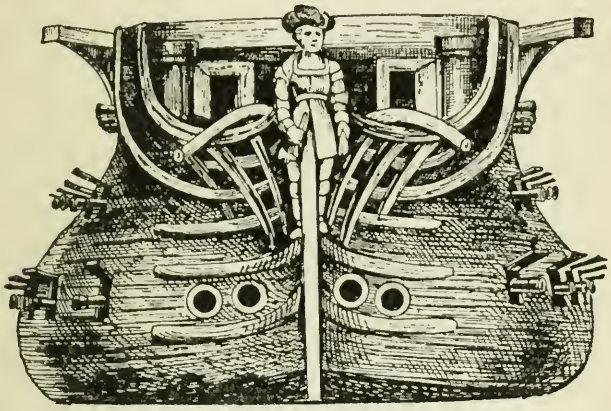
only brought to light so many capable British commanders, but added to and enhanced the possessions of our country, and caused her to be feared and respected.

Although our arms at sea were almost invariably triumphant over the French, although we captured their outlying possessions and defeated their fleets, still in Europe we had done them but little damage, and they were not only preparing in 1758 to send reinforcements to North America, but they were also collecting transport with the idea of the invasion of England. Intelligence was received in England that at Rochefort, on the Biscay coast, a large number of transports and ships of war were fitting out. Accordingly, in March, Admiral Hawke left England with seven sail-of-the-line and three frigates to destroy the ships, burn the stores, and put an end to any chance of the expedition getting to sea. It was on 3rd April that Hawke entered the Basque Roads, to which place we shall refer later on in another chapter, and ascertained that the French force consisted of five sail-of-the-line, seven frigates, in addition to upwards of forty transports.

They were protected by heavy batteries on the Isle d'Aix, which lies off the mouth of the river Charente. Although the man-of-war strength of which they disposed was actually superior to that under the command of Hawke, they did not put to sea; neither did they exchange a single shot with him; they actually cut their cables and retreated, lightening their ships to enable them to get into a place of complete safety. Such was their hurry that they threw overboard guns and stores and drifted on shore. Hawke could not get at them,

but he had attained his object in crippling the expedition, and sailed away well satisfied.

Another expedition against the French coast, under Lord Anson and Howe, left England on the 1st June and transported an army of 14,000 men, under the command of the Duke of Marlborough, from one point to another along the northern shore. But the military commander did not like the look either of St. Malo or



Head view of a British second-rate, showing old beak head, 18th century, 1758.

Havre, both of which places he decided were too strong to assault. A certain amount of military stores were destroyed and considerable damage done, but when after an inglorious career of some weeks the expedition returned to Spithead, it was said that we had "been breaking windows with guineas," and King George II. remarked that if we could boast of having burnt empty ships, the French would say that they had driven off full ones. Another expedition succeeded in destroying the

batteries and stores at Cherbourg in August; but an attempt on St. Malo was a hopeless failure, and the English troops only saved themselves from annihilation by a rapid flight back to the fleet. We lost more than a thousand men, and our losses would have totalled that of the entire force had not the Duke d'Aiguillon, the French general, acted with personal cowardice and conducted the operations of his troops from the top of a windmill! Howe, who was in command of the fleet, then a captain, and destined thirty-six years later to immortalise himself as an admiral on "the glorious first of June," was instrumental in saving many of the soldiers as they retreated before an immensely superior force. Seeing that the boats hesitated to face the fire with which the landing-place was being scourged by the French guns, he rowed thither in his own barge, saved many soldiers personally, and animated everyone by the example that he set.

While we were busy in this way the French were no less active on their side of the Channel. It was their intention, as it was that of Napoleon Bonaparte fifty years later, to collect an army in Northern France; to provide for its transport by means of large, flat-bottomed boats, and to clear the way for their passage to the south coast of England by means of concerted action of their fleets against the British navy. One fleet, to be commanded by Monsieur de la Clue, was being equipped at Toulon; a still larger one was in preparation at Brest under the Marquis de Conflans. When all was in readiness the two fleets were to sweep the Channel clear of all opposition, join forces at Havre, there embark the Duke d'Aiguillon and the army, and sail for the south

coast of England. At the same time Thurot, who had made a famous name for himself as a privateer, was to sail in command of a small but well-appointed force from Dunkirk, having on board soldiers for a land expedition, and make a descent on the coast of Scotland or Ireland. Whether the Duke d'Aiguillon had made arrangements to land on a part of the coast where windwills were to be met with at frequent intervals, we have no information!

The danger was pressing, the menace was very real, but England did not sit down, fold her hands, and wait for the aggressor to arrive. Hawke was sent to blockade Brest; and Rodney, who had only just been made an Admiral, was detailed for the service of bombarding Havre, at which port he arrived on 3rd July 1759. Havre was by this time—to use a nautical expression—full to the bung! Transports and flat-bottomed boats, for use in conveying the army of the brave Duke, were there in their hundreds; tumbrils, waggons, field guns, ammunition trains, horses, fodder, provisions, harness, spare small-arms, nautical stores of every kind and description, filled the place to absolute overflowing. Added to this, powerful batteries had been erected along the shore fully manned and awaiting attack. As soon as Rodney appeared these opened a heavy fire on the fleet, which was continued without intermission. Rodney was provided with a number of "bomb vessels," which threw bombs guaranteed to set on fire anything inflammable with which they came into contact.

All night the British sailors worked like fiends to get the bomb vessels in position, cheered on in their arduous toil by their active young Admiral rowing round in his

barge, indicating the exact spot where each of the clumsy vessels was to be moored. With such a will did they tackle this part of their work that at daybreak on the 4th the bombardment began, and continued for two days and nights. Why no attack was made upon them from the shore by means of boats, it is hard to understand, as they were the means of wrecking all the chances of the expedition. The rain of bombs which poured down upon Havre set fire to transports, flats, stores and provisions, while everything that was not consumable was more or less wrecked by the terrible explosions that they caused.

Some of the flats escaped along the shore, but they were pursued and driven ashore at Port Bassin, where Rodney caused the French commandant to burn them himself. If he did not do so, he was told by the British Admiral, the town, which was within range of the fleet, would be levelled with the ground. It must have been a remarkably bitter pill for the commandant, but there was no help for it, and the flats were burned.

Rodney then returned home, having destroyed Havre so completely that for more than a century it never recovered the importance that it had possessed before his visit: not only was its destruction complete, but it ceased to be able to protect the fleets of France. During all this time Admiral Boscawen was blockading Toulon, while Hawke was off Brest, so it will be seen that the French navy could not complain of want of attention on the part of our own. Boscawen attempted to get de la Clue to come out into the open, but the French commander preferred to lie up under the guns of Toulon. Presently the English Admiral had to go to

Gibraltar for provisions and water; and de la Clue, thinking the opportunity too good to be missed, slipped out and made sail for the Straits, in an effort to join Conflans off Brest. Somehow it was discovered that he had got through the Straits without being seen, and instantly Boscawen was on his track. He came up with him off Cape Lagos, where after a short action the Admiral's ship, *Océan*, 80, was taken, and three 74's and one 64-gun ship shared her fate.

Meanwhile Hawke was blockading Brest, and backwards and forwards from May to October did those British line-of-battleships and frigates range, never losing sight of the entrance to Brest Harbour for a single hour, unless they were driven off by the weather. When the wind was easterly, that is to say off the land, then the ships of the blockading squadron would keep so close to the port that they were only just out of range of the guns in the shore batteries. At such times as these there was nothing to prevent Monsieur le Marquis de Conflans from coming out—save and except the British fleet; if he came out he was bound to fight. If, on the other hand, the wind were westerly, or south or north-westerly, then the Frenchmen could not beat their heavy ships out through the tortuous passage by which Brest Harbour is approached; so the ships outside could haul off to a safe distance and wait under easy sail till the wind changed once more.

No men ever deserved better of their country than those of Hawke's Fleet—and indeed of other fleets who performed the same duty—blockading the great French port. Their lot was one of intolerable monotony, months passing and still finding them at their post, waiting and

longing that the enemy would make up his mind to come out and fight the matter to a finish. The food was atrocious and the men were half starved; the water smelt abominably from being kept in casks; while as for the beer, which at this time was supplied to the ships of the fleet, it was almost invariably sour. During this blockade of which we are speaking, Hawke wrote to the officer at Plymouth, who was responsible for supplying the beer: "The beer brewed at your port is so excessively bad that it employs the whole time of the squadron in surveying it and throwing it overboard. A quantity of bread from the *Ramillies* will be returned to you by the *Elizabeth*; though not altogether unfit for use, yet it is so full of weavils and maggots that it would have infected all the bread come on board this day." It will be observed that the bread—for which read biscuit—was not reckoned as "altogether unfit for use," although it was full of "weavils and maggots." The fact of the matter was that not only in 1759, but also for more than a century after that date, the unfortunate mariner had to put up with the presence of these horrors in his biscuit. It was the mark of the sailor, down to very recent times, that if he were about to eat anything in the shape of biscuit, he invariably first tapped it on the table before putting it into his mouth. It was not until it began to be stowed in airtight and watertight tin-lined boxes that the "weavil" and the maggot were finally defeated. The waste was enormous, as whole bags of "bread" often became nothing but a crawling mass of insects, at which even a seventeenth-century mariner would turn up his nose, and which had to be immediately thrown over the side, as soon as it made its appearance

on deck from the bread-room. The salt meat, also, was not exactly a meal for persons of dainty appetites; it had a way with it of becoming what was called "rusty"; and the pork assumed a delicate green hue which was far from reassuring to those whose dinner it was destined to be. As for the beef—invariably known as "salt horse"—it took upon itself to become so hard that sailors were popularly supposed to carve figures out of a 4 lb. piece, in the way that the sculptor ashore works in marble.

Then what is known to-day as "sanitary science" was altogether unknown. It was before the days in which ships' bottoms were coppered, and many of the ships leaked like baskets. Part of the regular routine of the watch when it came on deck for its four-hour spell of duty, was to pump out the bilge, which smelt so abominably as to pervade the whole ship with its sickly and noxious odours. The effect of all these things put together: the abominable food, the bad water, the sour beer, the impossibility of keeping the bilges sweet, the fact of the bad weather when men were often wet through for days at a time, had naturally enough a terrible effect on the health of the men. They sickened with all sorts of diseases and died for want of proper medicines, but most of all from the conditions with which they lived surrounded. There was also the annoyance, from the point of view of the mariner, that from long continuance at sea the bottoms of their ships became so foul as seriously to impede their sailing powers, and many a fat prize escaped merely because being straight out of harbour she was able to show a clean pair of heels to the fouled vessels by which she was pursued.

Boscawen had taken three prizes: *Centaur*, *Temeraire*, and *Modeste*. These ships were added to the navy under the same names, which remain to the present day. Now it was the turn of Hawke to show the French that no fleet of theirs was safe as long as a British Admiral awaited them in the open ocean. We have said that he had already maintained the blockade from May till October; in November bad weather forced him to take refuge in Torbay, and here the Admiral had to shift his flag from the *Ramillies* to the *Royal George* on account of the fact that the first-named ship "became waterlogged when it blowed hard." As the time was upon them when it might any day and any hour of the day come on to blow hard, the flag was shifted, as we have said. The *Royal George*, in which Sir Edward Hawke—as he then was—now led his fleet, was a new vessel of 100 guns, a singularly handsome ship, and one superior to anything that the Marquis de Conflans had under his command in Brest.

Hawke left Torbay on 14th November, and picked up a strong south-easterly breeze which drove him to the westward; two days later he fell in with the *Gibraltar*, a ship not belonging to his own fleet. From her he learned that, taking advantage of his absence, Conflans had escaped. He had, as a matter of fact, put to sea from Brest on the same day that Hawke had left Torbay.

The English Admiral came to the conclusion that Conflans was on his way to Quiberon, on the coast of Brittany, where a number of transports were known to be ready for sea and waiting to embark troops. He worked in towards the coast and, on the morning of the 20th, the *Maidstone*, one of the look-out frigates,

signalled that she had sighted the enemy. Hawke's force consisted of 23 ships-of-the-line; that of the enemy, 21 ships-of-the-line. Hawke had, besides his flagship, *Royal George* of 100 guns, three ships of 90 guns, carrying 750, 770, 780 men respectively; seven 74's, carrying from 600 to 700 men each; five ships of 70 guns and 520 men; two 64's with 520 men; and five 60's with 420 men. There were in addition ten frigates.

Conflans's flagship was *Le Soleil Royale*, of 80 guns and 1200 men; he had, besides, three more 80-gun ships, each with 1000 men; there were six 74's, each with 815 men; three 70's, each with 800; eight 64's, each with 750.

When the *Maidstone* sighted the enemy, he was steering to the north in pursuit of a squadron of English frigates that had been blockading the transports in Quiberon Bay, under the command of Commodore Duff. As soon, however, as they saw Hawke, they put their helms up and retreated the way that they had come. The chase lasted for five hours before the leading ships of the British Admiral came into contact with the rearmost ones of Monsieur de Conflans. That officer had been unable to avoid action—his main object—but had succeeded in his secondary one, which was to entangle his adversaries among the foul ground, the islands, and the shoals which lie inside of and to the southward of Belle-isle. It was by now blowing so hard that the French Admiral made certain that as the English pilots were unacquainted with this dangerous stretch of the coast, no high officer in command would dare to bring in his fleet.

It is quite possible that many an Admiral would

have taken this view; not so Sir Edward Hawke. His mission was to destroy the French fleet; he had them within reach, and he would allow nothing to stop him while they remained afloat. The action began soon after half-past two in the afternoon; by four o'clock the *Formidable*, a French 80, had struck; then followed a memorable incident, one seldom recorded in sea warfare. Hawke, disregarding all adversaries save the *Soleil Royale* alone, followed her with the pertinacity which belonged to his character; other ships fired at him as he passed. The pilot remonstrated with him; he (the pilot) did not know the ground; he said it was quite likely that in attempting to reach the French flagship that he would put the *Royal George* ashore. "You have done your duty in pointing out the danger," replied his Admiral; "now lay me alongside the *Soleil Royale*." On through the spouting reefs and the white waters foaming on half-hidden rocks went the *Royal George*. A gallant fellow, captain of the *Thésée*, 74, flung himself across his onward path to cover the retreat of Conflans. There was a slight alteration of the helm in Hawke's flagship; then as she went by at pistol-shot range her entire broadside —that of the most powerful ship of her day—struck the Frenchman and, with this one discharge, sent her to the bottom.

Another French liner, the *Superbe*, 70, was sunk, and the *Formidable*, 80, struck her flag. "Night was now come," says Hawke, "and being on a part of the coast among islands and shoals of which we were totally ignorant, without a pilot, as was the greatest part of the squadron, and blowing hard on a lee shore, I made the signal to anchor, and came to in 15-fathom water, the

island of Dument bearing east by north between two and three miles, the Cardinals, west, a half south, and the steeples of Crozie, south-east, as we found next morning." In this same dispatch the Admiral expresses the opinion that had he had another two hours of daylight, the whole French fleet must have been destroyed or taken.

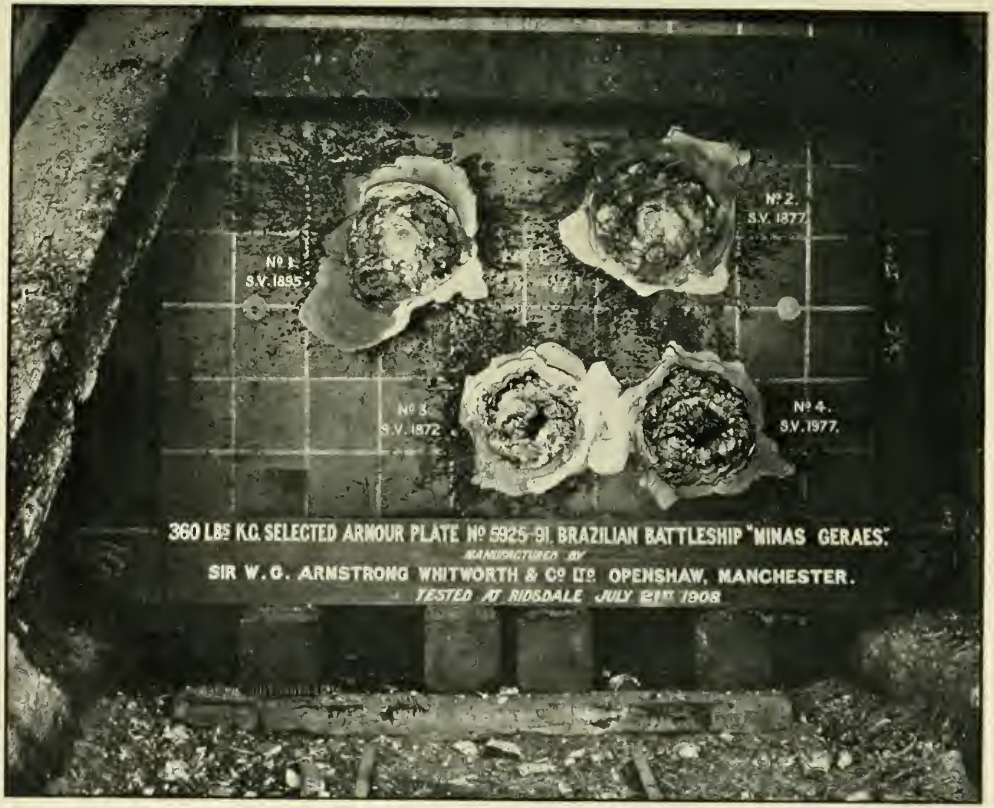
All night long the gale continued, and the booming of guns was heard; but these were not cannon fired at a foe, but signals of distress from ships in both fleets. When at last the reluctant dawn struggled through the black clouds, a spectacle of havoc met the eyes of those whose ships had ridden out the night at anchor. The English 74, *Resolution*, was ashore on a shoal known as the Plateau du Four; she was dismasted and helpless. The French flagship *Soleil Royale* and the *Hero*, 74, had anchored among the English ships. When dawn came the *Soleil Royale* cut her cable and got under way, whereupon a signal was made to the *Essex* to slip her cable and pursue. The big French ship in manœuvring struck on the Four near the *Resolution*, and remained immovable; the *Essex* managed to save herself; but one of her boats, with a lieutenant in charge, was driven on to the coast.

As soon as it was broad daylight, it was seen that seven or eight of the ships of the enemy were at anchor off the mouth of the river Vilaine. Hawke was desirous of weighing to attack them, but he was already to leeward of their position, and it came on to blow with such redoubled violence from the north-west, that he had perforce to remain at anchor and send down his top-gallant masts. The Frenchmen spent their time in

lightening their ships; and when the flood tide made in the evening, all but two had managed to get into the river. This was on the 21st, and by the 22nd the weather had moderated sufficiently for Hawke to send the *Chatham* and *Portland*, 50's, and the *Vengeance*, frigate, to destroy the *Soleil Royale* and the *Hero*.

The French saved the English sailors trouble by setting the *Soleil Royale* on fire; while the boats' crews from the ships detached for this duty did the same for the *Hero*. In the meanwhile Hawke had got under way and worked to the northward inside Point Pleuris, in an attempt to get at the two ships left outside the River Vilaine. But before he got there, their crews by desperate exertions had so lightened them that, as the flood made, they succeeded in getting over the bar and into safety in the river, whither the heavy-draught, unlightened English vessels could not follow.

But Hawke was not satisfied; it was true that he had driven the enemy in headlong flight before him, and that he had dared as greatly as had any man in following them into this dangerous and uncharted corner of their own coast; still the ships—at any rate, the larger portion of them—remained afloat and in the hands of the foe. There were seven or eight of them in the river some half a mile or so from the entrance, lightened by having cast into the sea everything that might have prevented them from getting in across the bar; and athwart the mouth of the river were moored a couple of frigates to impede the action of the English. The Admiral ordered twelve large boats to be prepared as fireships; these, under the support of the frigates *Coventry* and *Sapphire*, were ready by the evening to go in and attempt to



SHOWING RESISTANCE OF MODERN ARMOUR TO PROJECTILES.

PLATE XIV.

destroy the Frenchmen by burning them. But once again the weather settled down into so hard a gale that the enterprise had to be abandoned. Hawke had lost 50 seamen and marines killed and one lieutenant, and 220 wounded—this total did not include the drowned, of which there were a great number; also he had lost two of his ships by wreck. But he had taken, burnt, or driven on shore, six of the French ships-of-the-line, and had forced seven of them to take refuge in the river after having thrown overboard all their guns and stores. Of these, four never got to sea again, as they broke their backs by taking the ground at every ebb tide. The other three remained prisoners in the river until January 1761, as they were closely watched by a blockading squadron; they then managed to escape into Brest. The vessels which had made their escape to sea were pursued by a squadron under Keppel, which drove them to take refuge high up the river Charente, off Rochefort.

The battle, as a battle, as might have been expected from the weather and the circumstances in which it was fought, was a general mêlée, in which the captain of each ship fought for his own hand, supporting his comrades as occasion occurred. We have already referred to the gallant end that was made by the *Thésée*. It appears that in addition to the crushing broadside to which she subjected herself from the *Royal George*, that also her lower deck ports were open; when she was hit she heeled over, and the water rushing in she sank almost immediately. The fire of the *Royal George* on this occasion must have been directed with appalling accuracy; as not only did she sink the *Thésée*, but also did the same to the *Superbe*, 70. Into this ill-fated vessel she poured two broadsides,

and when she sank, the chaplain of the *Royal George* writes, "the *Royal George's* people gave a cheer, but it was a faint one; the honest sailors were touched at the miserable state of so many hundreds of poor creatures." After this episode the flagship of the British Admiral found herself in the midst of seven of her foes, all firing at her at once; but the fire was not only inaccurate, it was rendered absolutely wild by the prevailing weather conditions, with the result that she was surprisingly little damaged, considering the bombardment to which she was subjected.

It was not until 17th January 1760 that Hawke and his triumphant fleet returned home, where it was said, "others had conquered, Hawke had saved." Captain Campbell, who had been sent home by Hawke to announce the victory, had been received by the King, who had ordered him a present of £500 to buy a sword. Hawke received the thanks of Parliament, and a grant of £2000 a year was made to him.

He was a man singularly fearless in his criticisms, which did not make him particularly popular with the authorities, and the result of this was that he was not raised to the peerage until 1776. He then chose for his motto the one word "Strike" — singularly well chosen. All the world hastened then to write and congratulate the hero of Quiberon Bay; none of these letters can have pleased Hawke more than this one from a child, written in pencil—a baby scrawl:

"Sir Edward Hawke,—I hear you have beat the French when they were coming to kill us, and that one of your captains twisted a French ship round till it sunk. I wish you was come home, for I intend to go to sea if

you will take me with you.—I am Lord Granby's second son, CHARLES MANNERS."

The men, however, by whom the victory had been won, were neglected by the nation as usual, and their discontent found expression in the following doggrel verse :—

"Ere Hawke did bang
Monsieur Conflans,
You sent us beef and beer;
Now Monsieur's beat
We've nought to eat,
Since you have nought to fear."

Well may a modern writer say of Quiberon Bay that "it was for its day a victory as decisive as Trafalgar, and the greatest triumph which the British fleet had won since the defeat of the Armada."

Rodney by his bombardment of Havre, Boscawen by his defeat of de la Clue, each on his own station, did yeoman service for the cause of England; but it was reserved for Hawke to strike the last and most terrible blow, which put an end for more than half a century to French ideas of the invasion of England. He was one of the greatest sea officers that England ever employed; he saw with the single eye, and he took no risks of which he had not calculated the cost beforehand. His answer to his pilot is evidence of this: "You have done *your* duty," he said, "now lay me alongside the *Soleil Royale*." He saw that where the pilot's duty ended his own began; and the unknown dangers of that awful coast had as little effect on his nerves as the guns of the fleet of Moniseur de Conflans. Simple, direct, as fearless of responsibility as all else, he stands revealed as one of the greatest leaders that England ever produced.

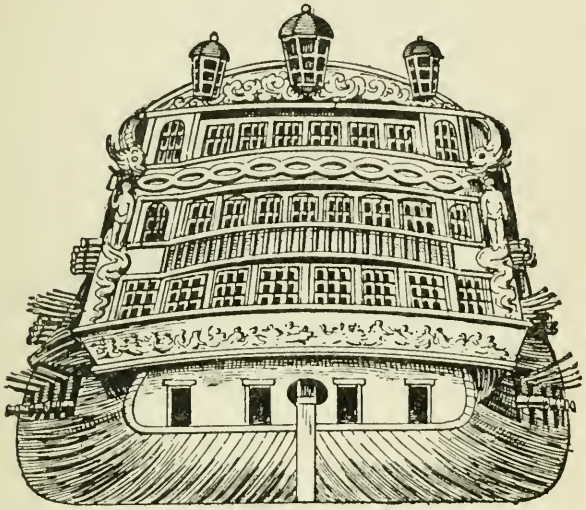
CHAPTER IX

FRIGATES—HOW PELLEW AND REYNOLDS FOUGHT THE *DROITS DES HOMMES* IN A BISCAY GALE, AND EDWARD HAMILTON IN THE *SURPRISE* CUT OUT THE *HERMIONE* AT PUERTO CABELLO

THE year 1797 was a great one in the annals of the British navy, for on 14th February was fought that famous battle off Cape St. Vincent which gave the much-deserved title of Earl St. Vincent to the Commander-in-Chief on this occasion, Sir John Jervis. But it is not with that great event that we are concerned here, but with one which illustrates, no less than the victory of a British over a foreign fleet, the spirit of the seamen of those days. In the time of which we speak the frigates were the eyes of the fleet, and it is to be remembered that one of the most frequent complaints made by Nelson was that he never had enough of them to enable him to watch the enemy as closely as he could wish.

The position of the frigate captain was one of much responsibility, one calling for great restraint of natural instincts, and a sober and discreet judgment. Why this was so was because there were occasions when it was the duty of the frigate not to stop and fight—which

every man from the captain to the second-class boy was most anxious to do—but to clear out with all speed, in order to tell the Admiral where the foe was. Great was the service rendered to the country by the many gallant frigate actions that were fought. Still greater was the use of this class of vessel in scouting and dispatch work. The frigate collected intelligence, and transmitted it with



Square stern of a British second-rate as built in 1758.

all speed to the proper quarter. Acting singly or in pairs, the frigates were as a rule under the command of young and enterprising officers with their names yet to make. The result of this was that no difficulties or dangers ever seemed to daunt them; and in all their adventurous and hazardous enterprises, most nobly were they backed by the men under their command. No captain could win glory for himself, his ship, his service,

and his country, except through the exertions, the gallantry, and the unselfishness of those beneath him in rank. If he were a man of humanity and common sense, as well as a man of dash and bravery, then indeed he need fear no foe that floated on the surface of the sea; as, for such a man, the sailors of Britain were content to die in heaps.

An officer who answered very well to this description was Captain Pellew of the *Indefatigable.* Two years before the date of the occurrence with which we are here concerned, he had, in conjunction with Sir Sidney Smith, performed a service which reached the very limits of audacity, even in those days when each frigate captain was vying with his brethren to see who could perform the most dashing deed. They had gone actually into the port at Brest to reconnoitre, quite regardless of the presence of a French fleet in that harbour. They had disguised their ships, hoisted French colours, and stood in among them until they had collected the information of which they were in search, and had then sailed out again to rejoin their commander-in-chief, Admiral Warren.

Pellew, even in those days, was known as one of the most consummate seamen who ever sailed a man-of-war; his professional competence was on a par with his devotion to the noble service to which he belonged; no enterprise daunted him, he was a veritable *preux chevalier* of the sea. Known and trusted as he was by his superiors of high rank, he was even better known and more fully trusted by the splendid fellows whom he commanded. In January 1797, Pellew was cruising in his frigate *Indefatigable*, 44, and in company with him was

the *Amazon*, 36, commanded by Captain Reynolds, a man of the same stamp as himself. Fifty leagues south-west of Ushant they fell in with the French 74, *Droits des Hommes*, which vessel was returning from the ill-starred French expedition to Ireland, with General Humbert and a number of soldiers on board ; she was carrying altogether a total of some thousand souls. If we look at the map of France, and note the situation of Ushant, and then mark off from thence the position in which the two frigates came up with the *Droits des Hommes*, we can see the danger that they were in,—not so much from their antagonist and her guns, as from the chance of being driven on shore on one of the most dangerous coasts that can be approached by the mariner.

After the action was over, Pellew wrote to Lord Spenser, then First Lord of the Admiralty, in the following terms : "I fear your Lordship will think me rather imprudent on this occasion, but what can be done if an enemy's coast is always to frighten us, and give them protection as safely as their own ports ? If Lord Hawke had no fears from a lee shore with a large fleet under his charge, could I for a moment think of two inconsiderable frigates ?"

It was thus that the frigate captain was content to talk of an action that has certainly never been surpassed for its gallantry, and that has hardly ever been equalled at any time for the magnificent seamanship that must have been displayed. What Pellew and Reynolds did sounds like a fairy tale, yet when it was over we find the senior of the two apologising and explaining to an astonished and delighted First Lord.

On 13th January the *Indefatigable*, then in latitude

47° 30′ north, with Ushant bearing north-east fifty leagues, sighted a large ship steering under easy sail for France. The wind was from the west, or dead on shore, and the weather was thick and hazy. Pellew instantly made a signal to the *Amazon* for a general chase, and followed this signal with another denoting that the chase was an enemy. It was late afternoon and getting dark; there were black and heavy clouds on the horizon; it was breezing up, with every prospect of dirty weather to come. At 4 p.m. the *Indefatigable* had gained sufficiently on the French ship to distinguish that she had two tiers of guns, and that her lower deck ports were shut. She had no poop, and Pellew judged her to be a French line-of-battleship *en razée*.[1] At a quarter to five, as the frigates closed with the chase, it was observed that the Frenchman had carried away her fore and main-top-masts; the report says: "The ship at this time was going 11 or 12 knots, blowing very hard and a great sea."

At a quarter to six the enemy was brought to close action, Pellew having close reefed his topsails in order not to pass ahead of his foe. Just at this time Captain Reynolds in the *Amazon* came up, but such was his eagerness to get into action, that he arrived with a press of sail, and after delivering his fire, passed on ahead. So close had the *Indefatigable* got to the Frenchman that he very nearly succeeded in running aboard the English frigate: indeed so close were they that they plied the *Indefatigable* with a heavy fire of musketry. But with so consummate a seaman as Pellew in command, the frigate was not likely to be run aboard by any

[1] Meaning that some of her guns had been struck below into the hold owing to the large number of men she was carrying.

enemy afloat—that is to say, if the English captain desired to play the game of long bowls—and seeing the crowds of men on board the *Droits des Hommes* this was the game he intended to play.

The *Amazon* by this time had reduced sail, and the two smaller craft placed themselves one on each quarter of the enemy and persevered with the action, which now continued without a break for five hours. And for all those five hours the frigates never ceased to torment the adversary, which could have sunk either of them with a broadside had she been given the chance. Certainly there were giants in those days! Think of the conditions in which this battle was fought! It was pitch dark; it was blowing a whole gale of wind; and a monstrous sea rolling in with the full stretch of the broad Atlantic behind it, was driving them closer and ever closer into Audierne Bay, and down upon the awful Penmarck Rocks. And now let us attend to this part of Pellew's report: "I placed some considerable reliance that her commander [that is to say, the commander of the *Droits des Hommes*] would not voluntarily sacrifice his ship and crew by running her for a dangerous part of the coast, and I promised myself to see the day, before we should have run down our distance. But in fact every creature was too earnestly and too hardly at work to attend to the run of the ship, and I believe ten hours more severe fatigue was scarcely ever experienced. The sea was high, the people on the main deck were up to their middles in water, some guns broke their breechings four times over, and some drew the ring-bolts from the sides, and many of them were repeatedly drawn immediately after loading. All our masts were much wounded, the

maintop-mast completely unrigged, and saved only by uncommon alacrity."

It may be explained that the breechings were thick ropes which were passed through a solid ring which was cast in the rear of each cannon. When the gun was fired, it of course recoiled with great violence, and was prevented from going too far, and brought up, by the breeching, which was secured on either side of the gun to ring-bolts permanently inserted into the side of the ship. The gun was pointed by means of handspikes and movable tackles. When a ship rolled so monstrously as was the case in this action, the guns occasionally "took charge," and either smashed the breechings or drew the bolts from the sides.

It is a grim picture, those desperate men fighting up to their waists in water; the guns taking charge about the decks as breeching after breeching broke. The thunder of the gale was outvying the thunder of the cannon, the wounded masts threatened at every roll to go by the board; while down in the cockpit the surgeon was lashed to a stanchion alongside of the man whose leg he was engaged in amputating. But now the end was near.

At about twenty minutes to four in the morning the moon showed through a rent in the clouds; and Lieutenant George Bell, who was looking out on the forecastle, caught a glimpse of the land. Hardly had he seen it when breakers were reported close under the starboard bow of the *Amazon*. Pellew says: "The judgment with which she was managed during so long an action and the gallantry of her attacks could not but warm the bosom of every spectator, and to the heart of a friend it was particularly delightful."

In this utterance of Pellew's we seem to catch the spirit of Nelson, that spirit which caused him to speak of his captains at the Nile as "a band of brothers." Even beyond and above the magnificent heroism and the splendid seamanship of this sea fight, we are conscious of something greater still. It is that Pellew and Reynolds and every officer and man in the *Indefatigable* and *Amazon* on that memorable occasion were thinking of one thing, and one alone, the good of their country. They faced all those desperate odds, a powerful and well-manned line-of-battleship, a January Atlantic gale, the probability of shipwreck, the certainty of death if this occurred, for that one overmastering passion, for that light which shone ever clearly in front of the simple and heroic lives that they led, the love of their native land, and the determination that she, and she alone, should be supreme in all the seas of all the world. When we read of heroism such as this we can only bow our heads and pray that, should the hour come when England is once more in danger, we shall be reckoned worthy to rank with those men of the *Indefatigable* and the *Amazon* who died on the night of 13th January 1797 for the country they loved so well, that they served so nobly.

The end was as great a tragedy as might have been anticipated. The *Droits des Hommes* was driven on shore on to the Penmarck Rocks; and her fate was shared by the *Amazon*. Pellew, with incredible exertions, managed to claw off the land with four feet of water in his hold. Of the *Amazon*, battered to pieces, flung on the rocks in the hour of her triumph, we may recall those lines that were written by Sir Francis Hastings Doyle

concerning another sea tragedy, the loss of the *Birkenhead*—

> "What follows, why recall? the brave who died,
> Died without flinching in that bloody surf,
> They sleep as well beneath that purple tide
> As others under turf.
>
> They sleep as well! and roused from their wild grave,
> Wearing their wounds like stars, shall rise again,
> Joint heirs with Christ, because they died to save
> His weak ones not in vain."

. . . . . .

In every service there are always individuals who bring upon it discredit; and in this same year in the West Indies there happened a mutiny on board the frigate *Hermione* (32), which sent a thrill of horror and disgust throughout the navy and the country. The captain of this vessel was named Hugh Pigott, and it was he who was the direct cause of the mutiny. Wherever in any disciplined force there is mutiny or insubordination, it may be set down at once that those in command are incompetent to perform the duties with which they are entrusted; and particularly is this the case on board a man-of-war. There an absolute and despotic power is—quite rightly—placed in the hands of one man. In his own ship he is the one and only ruler, he is by custom supported by the King's Regulations, he can make his ship just such another as Pellew's *Indefatigable*, or he may goad men into mutiny, as was the case with Captain Pigott of the *Hermione*. As long ago as 1797 it was possible to indulge in the greatest cruelty, almost with impunity, if the captain were thus inclined, and it is reported of Pigott that he gave orders

that he would flog the last man down from aloft when reefing topsails. It is quite evident that someone must be last, therefore someone was bound to be flogged, and in their haste to get down the rigging two unfortunate fellows fell from aloft and were killed. The only remark made by the captain was, "Throw the lubbers overboard."

Early in the year a gallant exploit had been performed by the boats of the *Hermione*, when, under the command of Lieutenants Reid and Douglas, they had cut out three French privateers from under the guns of a battery at Porto Rico, subsequently going on and destroying the battery. All this naturally redounded to the credit of the ship and her captain, and it might be imagined that that officer would have been proud of having such brave men and capable leaders under his orders. Such, apparently, was not the case, and he continued to behave with brutal and ferocious cruelty. There is a limit beyond which such conduct cannot go; and when the disciplined man is goaded beyond endurance he is apt to behave worse than the undisciplined. It was so in the *Hermione*, for in September the crew mutinied, and murdered not only their captain, but the lieutenants, the purser, the clerk, the surgeon, the lieutenant of Marines, the boatswain, and one midshipman. The few officers that were spared they cast adrift in a small boat. Had they contented themselves with killing their captain, in spite of its being an indefensible action, no one could have blamed them overmuch; but in order to try to safeguard themselves against the consequences of a crime for which they knew that no pardon could be expected, they slew their officers in this wholesale manner.

The crime having been committed, there remained the question of what was to be done with the ship? This was settled by sailing her into the harbour of La Guayra and surrendering her to the Spaniards. This present of an excellent and well-equipped frigate was joyfully accepted by the naval authorities of that nation, who manned her and sent her to sea under the command of a distinguished officer, Don Raimond de Chalas. Her mutineer crew dispersed, pariahs to be hunted down and hanged wherever caught, so long as one of them remained alive. Mutineers and murderers as they were, men who had added to these crimes the dreadful misdemeanour of handing over a ship of their own country to the enemy, one cannot fail to sympathise with them and to recollect that all their crimes must be laid at the door of that infamous tyrant, Pigott.

But mercy was far to seek in that iron age; punishment swift and deadly had to be inflicted on the mutineers of the *Hermione*; and the horrors which they had perpetrated had to be expiated in their own blood. The navy particularly felt it as a black disgrace and shame that sailing beneath the scarlet and golden banner of the Spaniards was a ship which once had flown British colours. There was one way, and one alone, by which this stigma could be removed, and this was by the recapture of the frigate. For two years in Spanish service did the erstwhile British ship sail and cruise between the northern coast of South America and the West Indian Islands; while the English ships on the station ranged the sea in a ceaseless and uninterrupted pursuit. At last information came to Sir Hyde Parker, the Admiral in command, that she had

sailed from Puerto Cabello, a port to the westward of La Guayra, and he dispatched the 32-gun frigate *Surprise*, under the command of Captain Edward Hamilton, to intercept her on her voyage to Havannah.

The *Hermione* had been re-armed by the Spaniards, and now carried 10 guns more than the *Surprise*; her crew had also been augmented, until she carried roughly double the number of men than were on board the English frigate. But the fact by no means daunted the ardour of those who went in pursuit; in fact, Hamilton asked the Admiral for an extra twenty men in order that he might attempt to cut her out if he found her in harbour. This request was refused, as the Admiral was of opinion that this was too risky an operation to be undertaken with a chance of success, and ordered his subordinate to try to intercept her at sea, cruising off Cape de la Vela for that purpose. This Hamilton did, but having hung about that neighbourhood for a month, seeing nothing of the *Hermione* and being very short of provisions, he was afraid that he would have to return to Jamaica, having accomplished nothing.

He determined before he went back to look in at Puerto Cabello on the chance that she might still be there; and when he arrived off that port discovered that she was lying at anchor moored head and stern under the protection of two batteries that mounted between them 200 guns. Before so desperate an enterprise as this, most men would naturally have recoiled, but the sight of the long-lost frigate inspired Hamilton and his men with an ardour that nothing could appease save her capture. They could but fail if the worst came to the worst; they did not think that they would. One

thing, at all events, was abundantly evident: they would have no chance at all if they attacked by day. Hamilton reckoned, as all great commanders will reckon, on the state of mind of the enemy, deeming themselves secure beneath the crushing weight of the batteries which might be expected to annihilate any attack. He concluded that the last thing they would expect would be any attempt against the ship in the position which she occupied. At night, however, the batteries could not see to shoot, the crew—especially as they were Spaniards—were not likely to be keeping a very vigilant lookout. Accordingly he decided to try to cut her out in the dark. He consulted his officers, he appealed to his crew; he had not to ask twice, all were burning with enthusiasm, all were only too anxious to wipe out the disgrace that they felt it to be, that the flag of Spain should fly from the peak of the *Hermione*.

It was on the night of 24th October 1797 that this deathless deed was accomplished, and it is hardly necessary to say that nothing was left to chance, the most minute instructions being issued to everyone who was included in the cutting-out force. What sympathy is not due to those unfortunates who, perforce, were left behind in the ship! One boat was detailed to cut the bow cable, another to cut the stern cable; the men who were to go aloft and let fall her sails had each his station assigned to him; while provision was made for certain of the boats to carry a towrope to attach to her bows and assist in towing her clear of the harbour. All these operations were to go on simultaneously, while the party on deck were in active conflict with the Spaniards on board. At last all was ready, and led by Captain Hamilton himself in the

pinnace, the boats started at a little before eleven o'clock at night. At first the luck was against them, as they were discovered by some outlying Spanish gunboats, which opened fire upon them. Hamilton, in pursuance of his plan, pushed on, disregarding the gunboats.

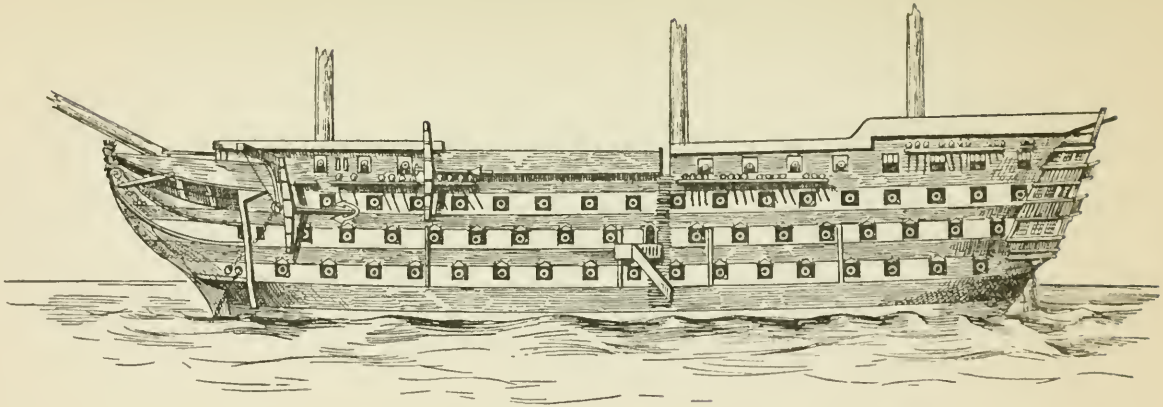
It seems impossible to imagine why his example was not followed; but the first lieutenant in the launch, the largest boat, and some others actually were foolish enough to remain and engage the gunboats, losing invaluable time in repelling their attack. The result of this was that Hamilton had but three boats with him when he reached the side of the *Hermione*.

But now fortune smiled on the attacking party; the Spaniards had been so busy firing their guns in an attempt to assist the gunboats that they had not, in the darkness that prevailed, observed the near approach of the leader and his boats, so that they were surprised after all. So complete was it, that the *Surprises* (name of good omen) were actually aloft and had let fall the foresail before the crew of the *Hermione* knew that the enemy was on board their ship. There was a fierce struggle on the quarter-deck, where Hamilton received a blow on the head from the butt-end of a musket that temporarily disabled him. The British sailors drove the Spaniards along the deck on top of a party of their own men who, mistaking them in the dark for the foe, fired and killed some of their own number. Things were getting decidedly warm, as the numerical superiority of the enemy was immense, when just in the nick of time the boats that had been engaging the gunboats appeared, and the reinforcements streamed over the nettings and on to the deck from every part of the ship.

One boat manned by marines acted in the manner that those sea soldiers always have acted, and still continue to act. That is to say, they were cool as cucumbers and never lost their heads for a second. They came in over the gangway, naturally in somewhat disordered fashion, for you cannot climb over the nettings of a hostile ship according to the drill book! However, once they arrived, they fell in in approved fashion and sent a withering volley into the foe, following this up with a bayonet charge. This drove sixty Spaniards into a cabin, where they remained, thinking that by this time no doubt they had been assailed by the entire British navy.

This was practically the end of the affair, as by now both cables had been cut, the foresails and topsails had been loosed, the towrope was fast, and we can make quite certain that no university crew ever rowed so hard between Putney and Mortlake as did those sailors of the *Surprise* with the *Hermione* in tow!

They certainly had every reason to do so, as by this time the batteries had opened upon her and the roar of 200 guns, the bright flashes from their muzzles, and the trundling of the round-shot across the face of the waters must have made them particularly desirous to get out of range. Several shots struck the now captured frigate on her outward journey to join the *Surprise*, awaiting her in the offing. Some took effect aloft, some struck dangerously low between wind and water; but she was a prize, and she was under way. Some of the crew were for blowing up her magazines, but this project was not received with enthusiasm by the others, who preferred to live to fight another day. It was less than an



The *Howe*, of 120 guns, launched in the reign of George III. during the Regency.

hour from the time that Hamilton first got alongside that all resistance had been beaten down ; and by two in the morning the *Hermione* was clear of the batteries and out of range of Spanish guns ; while at eight the next morning the flag of England floated once more from her peak.

Perhaps one of the most extraordinary circumstances of this affair was the relatively small cost to the victors. One hundred and nineteen Spaniards were killed and 97 wounded ; of the *Surprises*, not one man was killed, and only 12 were wounded. It is sad to have to relate that of these, the man who was far the most severely hurt was the gallant Hamilton himself, having had a musket butt broken over his head, a deep thrust in one thigh from a pike, and also having been struck by a grape-shot ; never to the end of his life did he recover from the effects of the wounds that he received. A more gallant deed, ably planned and successfully carried out, not even the annals of the British Navy can show ; and in all his slow convalescence, ay, even in after years, the consolation to that fine spirit must have been that it was by him and his invincible *Surprises* that the *Hermione* was restored to original owners, and that the stain on the honour of England had been cleansed by the blood that he had shed.

It is curious to find that in the following year, when Captain Hamilton was on his way home in the Jamaica packet, that that vessel was captured and he was carried as a prisoner to Paris. He was here received with great distinction by Napoleon Bonaparte and allowed to effect an exchange. At home he was granted the Order of the Bath, and by order of the Government a picture

of his exploit was painted and hung in the painted Hall at Greenwich Hospital. He himself left a record of his notable deed in naming his daughter Hermione Hamilton.

What became of the original crew of the frigate, that is to say, the mutineers who murdered their officers and handed over the ship to the Spaniards, is not known. Some of them returned to England and actually took service on board other men-of-war. But whenever they were discovered, and it could be proved that at the time of the mutiny they belonged to the *Hermione*, they were tried, condemned, and hanged without mercy. None can dispute the justice of their fate, as the brutal tyranny to which they were subjected could never excuse the callous ruffianism which caused innocent officers to share the fate of the captain. Terrible as the story is, and no one can read it without emotion, dark as was the villainy that caused the crime, monstrous as was the mutiny itself, we can yet feel that in that action at Puerto Cabello atonement for the sins of one crew of British sailors was fully made by their comrades of the *Surprise*; and further than this, that had such an officer as Edward Hamilton been in command of the *Hermione*, no mutiny would ever have occurred.

CHAPTER X

COCHRANE AT THE BASQUE ROADS

In February 1809 the entire western coast of France was blockaded by the British fleet, which was under the command of Admiral Lord Gambier. Those who know the Bay of Biscay in winter—or indeed even those who do not—can imagine the hardships undergone by those British seamen who were guarding Brest, Lorient, and Rochefort with the same sort of intensity as is displayed by a terrier at a rathole. A succession of heavy gales drove Gambier from his station off Brest, the northernmost of this chain of French harbours; and, taking advantage of his absence, Villaumez, the French Admiral, slipped out and got to sea with eight sail-of-the-line and two frigates. He sailed southward, hoping to effect a junction with those line-of-battleships that were lying in Lorient; but when he appeared off that port they did not move. Some frigates which ventured out were unfortunate enough to fall in with Rear-Admiral Stopford, who was cruising in the neighbourhood with a squadron of three line-of-battleships and one frigate. The French frigates were driven on shore after a short action and were wrecked on the coast. Villaumez proceeded to the southward, Stopford not being in sufficient force to check his onward progress. The

French fleet, passing into the Basque Roads, anchored off the southern extremity of the Isle d'Aix, between that island and the Isle d'Oleron. These islands are situated on the Biscay coast immediately opposite to the port of Rochefort and at the entrance to the river Charente; the channel that runs between them is split in two by the Boyart Shoal, and there is much shoal water in their immediate neighbourhood.

Stopford having definitely located the enemy, immediately informed his Commander-in-Chief. Lord Gambier at once joined him, and Commodore Beresford, who had arrived with three 74's. There were now 11 British sail-of-the-line outside the Basque Roads, and 11 similar French ships inside, and Gambier knew from previous experience that the Frenchmen were not in the least likely to come out. He wrote to the Admiralty in England and said that it appeared to him it might be possible to destroy the ships of the enemy by means of fireships; and that although the French had begun to construct defensive works between the islands of Aix and Oleron, they were not yet sufficiently far advanced to present any serious obstacle to a determined attack.

Gambier's opinion was fortified with that of Admirals Stopford and Harvey, both of whom had volunteered to undertake this duty; but even before his report had reached England the Admiralty had determined that such an attack might be made, and had begun to fit out fireships and bomb vessels for this service; and while this was being done Lord Cochrane in the *Imperieuse* frigate arrived at Plymouth. Cochrane was known as one of the most able and resourceful officers then afloat.

Not only was this the case, but he was also well acquainted with the harbour and its intricacies that it was proposed to assault.

Lord Mulgrave, the First Lord of the Admiralty, wished to know if Cochrane would make the attempt himself, and this request placed that officer in an unpleasant predicament. For a man of his ardent and gallant temperament no service could have been more congenial; but he felt himself obliged to point out that there were many officers in Lord Gambier's fleet senior to himself, who would feel most bitterly affronted were he to be sent out to undertake this business. Very naturally men on the spot feel that their birthright is being taken from them when someone else is sent to perform a duty that they are capable of performing; and all the more is this so when the superseding officer is junior to themselves. In this instance, however, Cochrane was left no choice, as the Admiralty ordered him to go and take charge of the affair; the results were disastrous, as we shall see. It was on 25th March that Cochrane received his final orders, and, in spite of his remonstrances, he no doubt felt an immense satisfaction at being singled out for a duty so vitally important. On 3rd April he anchored in the *Imperieuse* in the Basque Roads and joined Lord Gambier. The fears that he had expressed to the Admiralty on the subject of the resentment that would be felt in the fleet at his appointment, and the supersession by him of so many of his seniors, found immediate and most regrettable expression. Rear-Admiral Eliab Harvey, who was flying his flag in the *Tonnant* as second in command, was an officer of the most approved distinction; he had followed Nelson as second ship in

the weather line on the glorious day of Trafalgar. He had served with honour in every part of the globe; and he was far from being a man of a mild disposition when what he considered his rights were reft from him by a junior officer. He already regarded Gambier with contempt for not having allowed him to go in and make an end of the French Fleet; now, in his fury at Cochrane's arrival and mission, he went on board the flagship, and in language which no senior officer could possibly tolerate, told his superior exactly what he thought of him, and of the way in which he was conducting his command. In spite of his eminent services he was, perforce, brought before a court-martial, and sentenced to be dismissed from the service. It is satisfactory to learn that he was afterwards reinstated, especially as what he told Gambier was no more than what everyone else thought; but his offence was one that could not be overlooked in any disciplined force, not to speak of one with traditions so high as the sea service of our own country.

Lord Gambier was one of those exceptions who proved the rule that no men were so competent as the British sea officers in command in those days. Harvey had actually imputed personal cowardice to his Commander-in-chief, in which he was entirely wrong, as Gambier's conduct in Lord Howe's action had proved. All the same, as a Commander-in-Chief he was essentially the wrong man in the wrong place. Where he should have acted, he merely temporised; and in the instance that we have under consideration he had actually neglected to take soundings of the channel that led to the fleet of the enemy. But this was by no means all,

as, having intimated his opinion to the Admiralty that the French fleet should be attacked at anchor, he had now sent another dispatch directly contradicting all that he had previously written. There was, indeed, warrant for what the embittered Eliab Harvey had said, that had Nelson been alive and in Gambier's place, he would have destroyed the French fleet in less time than it took that officer to make up his mind that it could not be attacked.

Two days before Cochrane had arrived, Captain Irby, in the *Amelia*, 38, had destroyed some works which the French had been constructing on the Boyart Shoal; and this being the case it appeared that no obstacle stood in the way of an immediate attack. In order that no time should be lost, Cochrane urged upon Lord Gambier the propriety of constructing fireships on the spot and not waiting for those which were to be sent out from England. To this the Commander-in-Chief willingly assented, with a promptitude that shows he might have acted quite differently, in as far as subsequent events were concerned, had he and Cochrane been alone concerned in the affair. But jealousy of the interloper had poisoned the minds of the senior officers in the fleet, and Gambier was exposed to all sorts of counsels which he was not strong enough to combat.

In the matter of the fireships, however, Cochrane had his way; and that ingenious officer busied himself over one in particular that was of his own design. It has been thus described: "Having strengthened the floors in every possible manner with beams and wedges, to make the explosion more terrible by firmness of resistance, he packed in each a number of casks and

puncheons filled with fifteen hundred barrels of powder, binding them together with cables, and filling the interstices with sand; covering them also with hundreds of shells, and thousands of hand-grenades and rockets. It was not certain that an instantaneous explosion would cause equal destruction with the more lengthened conflagration of a fireship; but Lord Cochrane, like other great commanders, took into consideration the moral effect which his actions would produce on the enemy, and justly calculated that the employment of a machine so novel would create a panic in the minds of the French, which would greatly disable them from making a vigorous resistance to other means of attack."

Everything was ready on the 10th April, and on this date the fireships from England also arrived; thereupon Lord Cochrane urged upon the Commander-in-Chief to allow him to attack without any delay. But Cochrane's enemies had been busy, and although the weather was favourable Gambier refused his request, alleging as a reason that the crews of the fireships would be exposed to great danger. No one, it may be imagined, ever thought that guiding a fireship to her destination was one of the safest enterprises to which a man might be committed. The plea was absurd, and Gambier must have known it to be so. Although the tenderness of the Admiral would not allow him to let the fireships attack on the 10th, yet on the 11th he had changed his mind and allowed the attempt to be made, although the conditions were far less favourable, as the wind had got up and the sea was now very rough. Why it was that the French fleet, sheltered where it was, did not come out and give battle in the open it is hard to understand.

There was no question of disparity of force, as it consisted of one 120-gun ship, the flagship of Admiral Allemand; one 80-gun ship, eight 74's, one 50-gun ship, the *Calcutta* (which had been taken from us by Admiral Villaumez, and the Rochefort squadron four years before), and four frigates. They were moored in two lines, with the frigates in front; the whole line was covered by an immense boom nearly a mile long, reaching to within 300 yards of the Isle d'Aix, and secured in its place with chains and anchors. Cochrane had arranged that the fireships should be accompanied by all the boats of the fleet, but for some unexplained reason this was not done. As it turned out it did not matter much, as the sea was so bad that the boats which were put out by the French were obliged to return to their respective ships.

Cochrane left the *Imperieuse* at the northern edge of the Boyart Shoal, and himself embarked in the largest explosion vessel, which led the way in, followed by the fireships. If ever there were danger to be faced, if any occasion arose in which men had to be shown the way, then this officer was ever the shining example. He remained on board until the last possible moment, then kindling the port-fires himself stepped into the waiting boat and pulled madly from the scene of the impending explosion. The fuses had been unskillfully made, with the result that the explosion occurred long before the time calculated, that is to say, before the vessel actually reached the boom; and the following is the description given of the effect that was produced. "The sea was convulsed as by an earthquake. The boat in which Lord Cochrane himself was, though his men had been pulling hard for seven or eight minutes,

was nearly swamped by the whirlpool thus suddenly created.

"Shells, grenades, and fragments of wreck were hurled to a vast distance, falling among some of the French ships, though half a mile off, and spreading consternation even among those which were out of reach of the explosion. What was still more important, the mighty boom, which might otherwise have barred our advance altogether, was destroyed. The explosion had shattered the portion immediately in contact with the vessel; and a gap once made, the upheaving of the sea and the terrible surge, which lasted for some time, shook the beams of which it was composed out of the chains which bound them together, till in a few minutes the whole had fallen to pieces; and the fireships as they came down, passed without hindrance over the space where it had been moored. The fireships themselves were but indifferently managed by their commanders. Some were set fire to with such precipitate haste that they were more likely to injure our own ships than those of the enemy: one actually did come down upon the *Imperieuse*, which only saved herself by veering her cable; others passed to leeward of the fleet they were to attack; of the whole number, only four reached the enemy's position, and not one grappled an enemy's ship or did any real damage.

"Still their very failure only served to show the soundness of Lord Cochrane's general conclusions. For the French, as they saw them bearing down upon them, did not wait to test their power of inflicting injury; but thinking that they perhaps might not be ordinary fireships, but new engines of destruction like those whose

portentous explosion they had so recently witnessed, with almost one accord cut or slipped their cables, and drifted before the wind towards their iron coast."

That Lord Cochrane had been abundantly justified by the results obtained was visible on the following morning. The explosion ship had been too much for the nerves of the French mariners; having seen—and heard—that, and further seeing a procession of flaming vessels bearing down upon them, they had, with two exceptions, cut their cables and drifted before wind and sea until they piled up on the shore. Nor can they perhaps be blamed overmuch; if you waited until the fireship got entangled with your own vessel, then there was no hope at all of surviving the contact; sometimes it was possible to get out the boats and tow the approaching danger clear, but on this occasion it could not be done owing to the wind and sea that prevailed.

On the morning of the 12th, Lord Cochrane was able to see the damage that he had wrought; and good cause indeed had he for satisfaction. With the exception of the *Foudroyant*, 80, and *Cassard*, 74, every single French ship was hopelessly aground; and their crews were engaged in throwing guns overboard and disembarking stores in the effort to get them afloat once more.

The story of the Basque Roads so far was one of triumphant success; the rest of it is so little creditable to Lord Gambier, and to those on whose advice he acted, as to be painful to relate. The French ships lying helpless on the shore, it only remained to sail in and finish the business by destroying them altogether. At daybreak Cochrane signalled to the Commander-in-

Chief, who with the main fleet was only ten miles distant, that the ships of the enemy were in a position in which they could be easily attacked; this signal was acknowledged, but nothing was done, although the wind was fair and the tide on the point of flowing, two circumstances that should have been taken advantage of on the spot by Lord Gambier. Then Cochrane signalled that all the enemy's ships save two were ashore; still no notice was taken. A third signal stated that they all could be destroyed; a fourth, that half our fleet could destroy them; a fifth, that the frigates alone could destroy them; and altogether four priceless hours were wasted, while nothing was being done. At last, with the rising tide, some of the ships, which had been lightened of their stores and guns, were almost afloat again, and a further signal was made to the effect that the enemy was preparing to heave off: that, if anything, would move his senior officer, was the idea in the mind of Cochrane.

At last Gambier got under way and stood in for the scene of the action, but when he had covered half the distance by which he was separated from the grounded French ships, he came to an anchor again because, he said, it was not safe to venture any nearer, having regard to the wind and the flood tide, and this in spite of the fact that Cochrane's ship, the *Imperieuse*, was four miles farther inshore, and obviously in no danger. Finding that nothing would spur his Commander-in-Chief into honourable action, Cochrane then did a far braver thing than when he had piloted the explosion vessel up the roads on the previous evening. That is to say, entirely unsupported, he weighed his anchor and stood in alone to attack the whole of their fleet with his one

frigate. He calculated that not even Lord Gambier could allow him to proceed on such an enterprise unsupported; but where the remarkable bravery of the action came in, was in its utter fearlessness of responsibility. He had no right to move without the order of his superior officer, in whose presence he was; he might have been brought to a court-martial for so doing; but all this weighed as dust in the balance with the man who saw only the advantage of his country.

Technically, of course, he was wrong, as no officer, especially in the face of the enemy, has any right to act on his own initiative, and to ignore the presence of superior authority. But in war, as in other things, there are certain circumstances which alter cases; and it is possible that the gallant and enterprising frigate captain had in his mind's eye that occasion at Copenhagen when Nelson, to whom a signal had been made to discontinue the action, had placed his telescope to his blind eye, and declared that it was very odd, but he really could not see it!

And so the *Imperieuse*, entirely unsupported, stood in to attack the French fleet. The batteries on the island of Aix opened on him as he passed, but did no damage; he stood on till he reached the Palles Shoal, on which more than half the enemy ships were aground. The shoal lies just to the southward of the entrance to the Charente River, and the captain of the *Imperieuse* was taking no ordinary risk, not only in the calculated audacity of his attack, but also in the danger that he ran of piling his own ship up on the shallows which had already caused the Frenchmen to run ashore. We have to remember that had he lost his own ship, which was

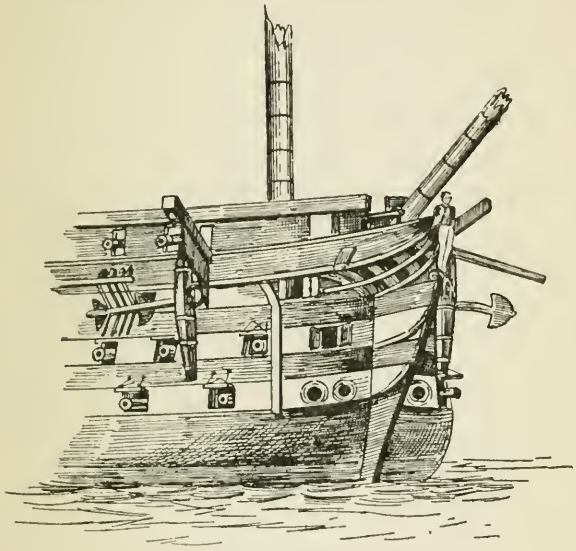
quite a reasonable thing to imagine, that he was acting on his own responsibility, and that he might have been dismissed from the service for what he was doing.

As soon as the *Imperieuse* got within range she began the action with two 74's, the *Aquilon* and the *Ville de Varsovie*, and also the *Calcutta*, the 50-gun ship that had been captured from us and was now flying the French flag; all these vessels were still ashore. The *Calcutta* was in such a position as to be able to reply to the fire of the English frigate; but so skilfully was this last-named vessel handled that her fire beat down that of the 50-gun ship, and she was forced to haul down her colours. At last Gambier was stirred into doing something, and two 74's, the *Valiant* (Captain Bligh), the *Revenge* (Captain Kerr), and five frigates, the *Indefatigable* (Captain Rodd), the *Aigle* (Captain Wolfe), the *Emerald* (Captain Maitland), the *Unicorn* (Captain Hardyman), and the *Pallas* (Captain Seymour), stood down to the support of their consort. The *Aquilon* and the *Ville de Varsovie* struck; the crew of the *Tonnerre*, another 74, set fire to their ship and escaped in their boats. All this took place between three-thirty in the afternoon and five o'clock; at that hour Captain Bligh signalled from the *Valiant* that there was still light enough to destroy five more ships that were in effect perfectly helpless; the reply from the amazing Commander-in-Chief was to recall the whole of the squadron.

But Gambier having loosed his dogs of war could not induce them all at once to let go of the prey into which they had fastened their teeth. The signal to return was ignored, and that night Bligh, with some of the other captains, went in a gig to reconnoitre, but

found too many of the boats of the enemy about to be able to accomplish anything.

When day broke no French boats were to be seen, neither was there any sign of life about any of the stranded ships; accordingly preparations were made for boarding and taking possession of them, when another and more urgent signal of recall was made, which they



Round bow of first-rate, date 1820.

did not dare to ignore. They accordingly returned after having set fire to the ships captured overnight; but Cochrane still refused to budge, and with him remained the *Pallas* (Captain Seymour) and four brigs, the *Beagle* (Captain Newcombe), the *Encounter* (Lieutenant Talbot), the *Conflict* (Lieutenant Butt), and the *Growler* (Lieutenant Crossman). All that night the sorely tried crew of the *Imperieuse* had been refitting and repairing

damages; and no sooner was she in a position to move than Cochrane got her under way and prepared to attack the *Foudroyant*, 80, and *Cassard*, 74, which had hauled off and were making for the mouth of the Charente River. That men could be induced to do and to dare what they did in the *Imperieuse* at the Basque Roads is the most amazing part of the whole story. Not only her captain, but every man and boy in that ship seem to have been impervious to fatigue, to have counted no odds, to have been prepared to work and to fight, as few others have ever done since ships first went to sea.

To have had such people under his command and not to have used them for the benefit of that country, for whom they were prepared to sacrifice everything, is the terrible responsibility which Lord Gambier incurred. Hardly had the *Imperieuse* started when Cochrane received, not only a signal, but a letter from the Commander-in-Chief ordering him to return at once. The disgusted captain begged in vain, at all events, to be allowed to remain and complete the destruction of the ships ashore before he withdrew; but another still more imperative letter was sent, and with a heavy heart, and no doubt in the very worst of tempers, he was forced to retreat and join the Admiral outside. This was the end of the affair as far as the French were concerned; as soon as the *Imperieuse* sailed away the crews returned on board their ships and proceeded to warp them off.

The sequel to this is as thoroughly unsatisfactory as was the conduct of the Admiral throughout; and we give it in the words of one writing not very long after these occurrences:

"Lord Gambier had thus done what the whole power of France could not have done, he had saved the French fleet from Lord Cochrane. He endeavoured to blind the nation to the true character of the achievement by dwelling in his dispatch on the destruction of the four ships that had been burnt, and promising to destroy the rest, if any further attempt to do so should be found practicable; and to appease Lord Cochrane himself, by expressing "the highest admiration of his vigorous and gallant attack . . . which could not be exceeded by any feat of valour hitherto achieved by the British navy.

"In the former object he for a time, to all outward appearance, succeeded. The Duke of Portland's ministry, which was falling into general discredit, thought it their best policy to make the most of what had been done, and announced their intention of proposing a vote of thanks to him in Parliament. As Lord Cochrane made no secret of his resolution to oppose such a vote, the Admiralty appointed a court-martial to inquire into Lord Gambier's conduct; which, after a display of the most undisguised partiality towards the Admiral, and of enmity to Lord Cochrane, pronounced a formal approbation of his behaviour throughout. Fortified by this judgment, the ministers succeeded in carrying the vote of thanks; and Lord Gambier obtained the highest honour that his country could bestow, while Lord Cochrane had a mark set against him at the Admiralty, and after he resigned the command of the *Imperieuse*, could never again obtain employment.

"The French at the time formed a different judgment. They gave all the credit for the injury that they had received to Lord Cochrane's energy; for their unex-

pected deliverance from further destruction, to Lord Gambier's supineness. . . . Lord Cochrane's career now ranks among the very first of those naval heroes whose professional career is ever to be held up as full of brilliant example to the youthful members of the service; and Lord Gambier, among those whose reputation is best served by silence and oblivion."

CHAPTER XI

SAIL AND STEAM—THE BOOM AT OBLIGADO—THE TRAINING OF THE SEAMAN

We have already spoken of the hostility with which the sailor regarded steam on its introduction and for years afterwards; and this attitude of his was by no means altogether due to pig-headed obstinacy and dislike of change—although these entered very largely into the affair—as a good deal of what he had to say was perfectly true, and justifiable from his point of view. Very few people have any idea what a long time it is since steam was used practically to move ships over the surface of the sea; but as far back as the year 1736 one Jonathan Hulls, a native of Gloucestershire, patented a method of propelling ships by steam, and in 1737 produced a book called, *A description and Draught of a newly invented machine for carrying vessels or ships out of or into any harbour, port, or river, against wind or tide or in a calm.* But the invention of Jonathan Hulls was not to put engines into an actual seagoing ship, it was only to provide a tugboat to tow the argosies of the merchantman, and her more stately consort the man-of-war, in and out of any ports that they might visit. There exists a delightful picture of Jonathan Hulls' steam tugboat,

which is shaped something like a washing-basin and has two paddle wheels dependent from her stern, towing a two-decked man-of-war into port. The engine in the tugboat revolved the two wheels that projected over the stern by means of ropes that went round the circumferences. The two wheels were connected by a beam, and in this beam were fixed—on long shafts—literal "paddles"; that is to say, that had you unshipped one of these paddles from the beam into which it was fixed, you could have used it to paddle a boat by hand. It is in this way that we arrive at the term "paddle wheel," which has been in use ever since.

It is sad to have to relate that the invention was a failure from a money-making point of view; and no doubt the commercial men of that day regarded the ungainly, panting, puffing boat as the ridiculous fad of a half-crazy individual. Those who wish to inform themselves of the different steps by which the steamship advanced from the tugboat of Jonathan Hulls to the monster vessels of the present day, cannot do better than to consult that most interesting book called, *Steamships and their Story*, by Mr. E. Keble Chatterton. Here the long struggle of the steam vessel to come to her own is set forth in detail with a wealth of illustration which makes the volume as fascinating as it is instructive.

While the merchantmen merely regarded the steamship as an unpractical fad of certain crack-brained scientific people—for how would it be possible, they asked, for any vessel to carry enough coal to take her across the Atlantic—the mariners who served on board the men-of-war had another, and more serious

objection. If you went into action in a steamer, they contended, at any moment a shot from the enemy might penetrate your side, arrive in the engine-room, and either make hay of the engines, or, if it attained to the boiler, that would blow up, and the ship and her company go to glory before their time.

In the year 1845 there was fought a singularly gallant action in the Uruguay River by a combined French and British force, in which sailing and steam vessels were employed, the steamers acting a very subordinate part in the operations, as was the custom of the time. No one really wanted to use them in the navy, but as they had by this time demonstrated that they could steam across the Atlantic with the help of their sails, they were grudgingly admitted to the list of the service and equally grudgingly employed.

In the year we have mentioned there flourished in South America a dictator of the name of General Rosas, who had his headquarters at Buenos Ayres. Into the disputes that this man had with other South American generals and dictators we need not enter. What concerned England and France, and indeed every civilised nation, was the fact that Rosas had for two years closed the great rivers Uruguay and Parana altogether. It was not to say that he had only prevented his South American rivals from trading on their waters, but he had absolutely denied the right to any ships, of any nation whatsoever, to pass into them from the sea. Trade was even then considerable; many French and English firms were doing business up the country on the banks of these rivers; and the outcry was so loud and so persistent for measures to be taken to open the

passage for free and unrestricted commerce, that France and England informed Rosas that, if he did not remove his prohibition, they should have to use force to compel him to listen to reason. The Dictator, who thought that he was quite strong enough to take on the two European Powers single-handed, was rude and defiant. Steps were accordingly taken to bring him to his senses.

There was in South American waters at this time one Don Guillermo (William) Brown, an Irishman from Foxford, County Mayo, who was commanding the navy of Dictator Rosas. In August 1845 he was employed in blockading Monte Video—which lies on the seacoast just outside where the two rivers in dispute run into the sea—and the first thing to be done was to clear out the valiant Don Guillermo, who had under his command a corvette—a vessel that carries guns only on her upper deck—two brigs, and seven small craft. Not much of a fight was put up by the navy of Rosas, which was hopelessly outclassed and outnumbered, and as soon as it was disposed of, Admiral Inglefield, commanding on the station, gave orders for the following vessels to proceed up the Uruguay, and to destroy anyone or anything that might attempt to bar their advance. These ships were :

Gorgon, paddle steamer, 1111 tons, 6 guns ; Captain Charles Hotham.

Firebrand, paddle steamer, 1190 tons, 8 guns ; Captain James Hope.

Philomel, 428 tons, 8 guns ; Commander B. J. Sullivan.

Comus, 492 tons, 18 guns ; Com. Ed. Aug. Inglefield, acting.

Dolphin, 318 tons; Lieut. T. J. Levinge.

Fanny, tender, 1 gun.

They were accompanied by the following French men-of-war:

San Martin, 200 tons, 8 guns; Captain Francis J. Tréhouart.

Expéditive, 16 guns; Lieut. Miniac.

Pandour, 10 guns; Lieut. Duparc.

Procida, 4 guns; Lieut. de la Rivière.

Fulton, paddler, 650 tons, 2 guns; Lieut. Mazières.

Those mighty rivers the Uruguay and the Parana, which fall into that estuary known as the Rio de la Plata, are navigable for great distances from the sea. The Uruguay pursues its course in a south-westerly direction until it arrives at Latitude 34° south, when it turns almost due south, in which direction it flows for 240 miles until it emerges over Palmas flats into the estuary. The Parana River, which flows to the westward of, and roughly parallel with the course of the Uruguay, approaches that stream so closely at one point that the two are but 85 miles apart. As the Parana is nearing the estuary it turns towards the sea in a south-easterly direction and, a few miles below Obligado, splits into two channels, known as Rio Parana and Parana de las Palmas. The main streams of the Parana and Uruguay converge, forming the Rio de la Plata. Buenos Ayres lies 38 miles south of the point where the two rivers join and flow into the sea. The island of Martin Garcia is situated just at the river's mouth. Colonia and Monte Video are situated on the northern shore of the Rio de la Plata, the last-named town lying 112 miles east of Buenos Ayres. Obligado is over 100 miles from the

mouth of the Parana, and this was the place selected by Rosas to make a stand and defy any attempt to penetrate farther up country. Five miles below Obligado an island, known as Medro Island, splits the river in two. Here its breadth is $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, whereas at Obligado it is barely one-third of a mile across.

The preparations made to give the English and French combined squadrons a warm reception lacked nothing in completeness. Rosas had some warrant for the defiance that he had launched at the Europeans, for both in men and in material of war he was most amply supplied. The natural arrogance of his nature had been enhanced by years of successful combat against other South Americans; and he set to work in earnest to engineer a crushing defeat of these insolent foreigners who had dared to dispute his authority.

Across the whole width of the river at Punto Obligado a boom had been thrown. This obstruction consisted of 24 hulks moored head and stern and connected with an iron chain cable. On the right bank of the stream were four batteries of the most formidable description. Numbers one and two of these batteries were below the boom, numbers three and four were above; while on the opposite shore, behind the boom, were moored the *Republicano*, armed schooner, so placed as to fire conveniently down stream, and several gunboats. In number one battery there were mounted one long brass 36-pounder, one long brass 32-pounder, four long brass 24-pounders, and three long iron 18-pounders. Immediately in rear of this battery was a wood in which were four field pieces. Number two battery had two long brass 18-pounders, two long iron 18-pounders, and

four field-pieces. Number three was similiarly armed. Number four mounted seven short 18-pounders. What number of men were employed is not stated, and was probably never known with any approach to accuracy. But there was certainly a very large crowd, and they were commanded by one of the bravest and most experienced of the Dictator's officers. That these people understood what they were doing and that they were no tyros in the art of war and the management of shore artillery, is instanced by the fact that they had all their ranges marked off by white staves planted in the bank of the river at stated and measured distances from the batteries.

They had every reason to anticipate a victory. They were not in the position of men in a land fort on the sea-coast, whose aim is disturbed by ships tossing on the waves and moving swiftly about, for ever changing the range. The ships that had to attack them must sail in dead smooth water up to the exact spot where their marked ranges began, when they could hammer at them as they approached. As the largest number of their adversaries were dependent on the wind for their manœuvres, and as there was a swift current running down the river, their difficulty in coming into effective action would be likely to be extremely great.

After a dilatory passage up the river, the expedition reached the island of Medro ; the sailing vessels finding it very hard to stem the current. They left Martin Garcia on 8th November 1845, and it was not until the 20th of the same month that the attack took place. The following description is taken from the official report of Captain Hotham of H.M.S. *Gorgon*, to Admiral S. H. Inglefield commanding the station :

"H.M.S. *Comus*, Thursday, 20th November 1845. Remarks.

"At 6.30 a.m. a light breeze from south-east. *Philomel* weighed by signal. Formed larboard division as follows: French corvette *Expéditive*, *Fanny* tender, and French schooner, proceeded to take up their positions on the right bank of the river to flank the battery at 700 yards' distance. At 9.10, the vessels being well advanced, the starboard division weighed, and in the following order proceeded to take up their positions, namely, *Dolphin*, *San Martin*, *Comus*, *Pandour*. At 9.40 a.m. batteries opened fire on the headmost ships of each division, the fire rafts at the same time coming quickly down the stream."

In a space of an extreme breadth of 600 yards there were collected and huddled together no less than 10 ships; and to avoid the fire rafts must have been no easy matter. Also it would appear that no use was made of the steam vessels to tow the sailing craft into action; that would have been entirely repugnant to the spirit of the time, and the sailing vessels advanced as best they could independently of aid. The wind failing, the sailing ships had to anchor where they were, and continue the action as best they might. The first stroke of the enemy had failed, as his fire rafts drifted harmlessly down the stream, and by 10.30 a.m. the action was general, the ships where necessary laying out stream anchors and hauling their broadsides up until they bore upon the batteries. The stream anchor is a small anchor that can be carried away from the ship in a boat with a hawser attached to it, and then let go from the boat in any position that may be deemed advisable; the hawser

THE LAUNCH OF H.M.S. *THUNDERER* FROM THE THAMES IRONWORKS.

PLATE XV.

is then taken on board the ship and she can drag herself by it with her broadside to the current of a river, or against the wind if she be lying in an open roadstead.

The log of the *Comus* continues: "10.30, one carronade was dismounted on the quarter-deck, and Lieutenant Brickdale, who was on the forecastle directing the shell guns, was killed. 10.40, officer from the *Gorgon* from Captain Hotham desired us to move farther in, when we slipped both cables; but the wind was so very light, and our running rigging so much cut up, we could not make any sail to gain a position till 11.15." While the *Comus* was thus engaged, her consorts were quite as busy. Thus the *Dolphin*, brig, records in her log: "9.15, set on fire by the enemy's vessels drifting towards us; 9.30 hauled up to avoid them." These must have been the fire rafts already mentioned by the *Comus*. The log goes on: "Exposed to a very heavy fire of round-shot, grape, and canister and congreve rockets; sheets, halyards, and braces being all shot away, found we could not get any farther ahead; let go kedge anchor still exposed to heavy rocket fire. Firing with midship and port guns at forts, starboard at schooner with round-shot. French brig of war *San Martin* passed ahead and anchored. Rest of squadron firing at forts drove the enemy from the guns in 2 and 3 forts, which they re-manned four times."

It will be observed that "the *San Martin*, French brig-of-war, passed ahead and anchored." It was a race between the gallant Tréhouart in that vessel—which had originally formed one of the fleet of Don Guillermo Brown, and which was now arrayed in battle in French hands against her former owners—and that equally

dashing officer, Lieutenant Levinge, as to which could get the nearer to the enemy. Where Tréhouart was to anchor, was settled for him by the enemy, as a shot carried away the securing chain of his anchor and let it go for him; as he was then nearer than any other ship and exposed to a murderous fire, it is to be presumed that he was quite happy! The *Gorgon* and the *Fulton*, English and French paddlers, employed themselves in the earlier phase of the action in towing the fire rafts clear; and it is noted in the log of "the steam vessel *Firebrand*," that they observed cavalry drawn up on the outside and to the left of the forts; it is probably the only case on record of cavalry having any bearing on the fortunes of a naval action. About 11.30—or between that and noon; the times vary somewhat in the different logs—the *San Martin*, her cable having been cut by a round-shot, drifted out of action, a complete wreck. So damaged was she aloft that no sail could be set, and she eventually took the ground. But Tréhouart was completely unaffected by such a trifling circumstance as this; being the senior French officer present, he shifted his senior officer's pennant to the *Expéditive* and continued to direct the operations of his squadron from her. Almost at the same time as the mishap took place to the *San Martin*, an even more serious one befell the *Republicano*, the enemy schooner anchored above the boom, for she blew up.

It was by this time quite evident that, if the action were to be won, it was necessary for the ships to pass the boom in order to enfilade the forts from up-stream; if this could be accomplished the day was won. Captain James Hope—later on in his career to become Admiral

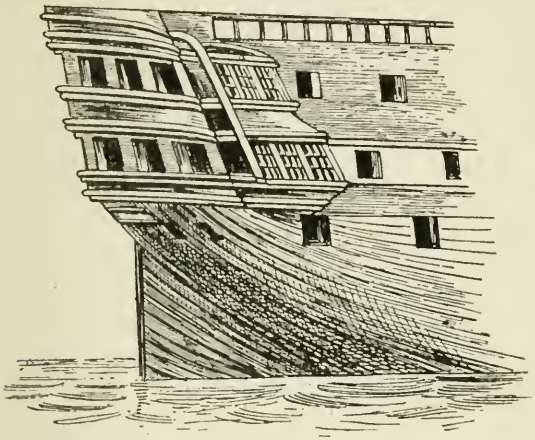
Sir James Hope—asked and obtained permission from Hotham to make an attempt to cut the chain with which the hulks were bound together. The matter had been in his mind ever since he had discovered of what the boom consisted, and he had actually caused his armourer to practise cutting through a chain cable in order that he might be quite ready when the time came. The log of the *Dolphin*, brig, states curtly, "Sent cutter at 11.50 with *Gorgon's* armourer to assist Captain Hope in *Firebrand's* boat to cut the chains across the river, which was accomplished." Hope with his armourers attacked the boom in three boats; regardless of a perfect storm of shot and shell, grape and canister, from every gun that would bear; these men sat on the deck of one of the hulks chipping away with cold chisel and hammer; and we may imagine the length of time that such an operation took. Three other boats under the command of Lieutenant William Henry Webb, Mate Frederick Falkiner Nicholson, and midshipman John Edmund Commerell—afterwards Admiral Sir John Edmund Commerell, V.C.—severed the riding cable of the craft on the deck of which Hope and his armourers were at work. At last this perilous business was accomplished, and, the chain binding the hulks together being severed and the riding cable gone, the released vessel floated rapidly down the stream amid the cheers of the French and the English tars. Perhaps the most remarkable thing in the whole of this affair was that no one was hit; the more so as the enemy had proved themselves excellent shots when dealing with the ships, as their battered condition attested when the battle was done.

But although a gap 100 yards in width was now

open in the boom, the conflict was far from being over. The log of the *Comus* now tells us that "the schooner had blown up and the boats had also succeeded in cutting the chains across the river when the French steamer, who had been for some time taking off the fire of the *San Martin*" (here it is evident that it is meant the *Fulton* had been taking the fire from the enemy and shielding the disabled brig), "proceeded through the opening and commenced flanking number 4 battery. At 2 p.m., Captain Hotham, passing on in the *Gorgon*, followed by *Firebrand*, hailed us to get farther in if we could. Both steamers passed through the opening under a very heavy fire of grape and rockets from the batteries, and took up their positions flanking all the batteries; the fire from them was slacking fast at 3 p.m. A light wind springing up slipped, but owing to its falling light and variable and our rigging so much cut up we casted the wrong way" (this means that they intended to turn to the right, but were frustrated by the wind, which turned them to the left or *vice versa*) "and drifted ashore, receiving the raking fire of number 1 battery." After being on shore in this particularly unpleasant position for an hour, the ship was hove off and anchored again. By 5.30 in the evening the batteries had all been silenced, and then the marines and small-arm men of the fleet landed under cover of the fire of the French vessels *Expéditive* and *Pandour*. There does not appear to have been much fighting on shore, and the men landed between five and six o'clock in the evening and returned to their ships at 10 p.m., having spiked the guns in the batteries. On board the *Comus* the log records that at eleven o'clock that night

they "committed the bodies of the killed to the deep"; and this announcement is immediately followed with another, to the effect that "several bottles damaged in dispensary; and broken in Captain's cabin, dish-cover and one wineglass." The descent in an official document from the sublime to the ridiculous is certainly abrupt.

The log of the *Gorgon*, which was the ship of the senior officer, Captain Hotham, tells us that the boats



Elliptical stern, three-decker, 1820.

returned at 8.40 p.m., and this is certainly the correct time, as the boats and small-arm men were under the personal command of Captain Hotham. The landing party "had destroyed 1, 2, and 3 forts and spiked guns." This was the end of the affair, and it only remained for the expedition to destroy the rest of the hulks at their leisure. But their victory had been by no means too easily accomplished, as all the ships had suffered, and some of them severely. The enemy—who were under

the command of one of the ablest lieutenants of the Dictator—were brave, persistent, and excellent artillerymen, which made it, as we have remarked before, all the more wonderful that Captain Hope's party for cutting the chain escaped unscathed. On board the *Comus*, which had 2 killed and 2 wounded in the action, we find the following note at 1.30 p.m. : "At this time the ship had received several shots in her hull; the bowsprit severely wounded, a shot having lodged in the centre of it; the foremast wounded below the partners; the rigging much cut up. William Ogden, boy, killed, and two petty officers slightly wounded." The log of the *Dolphin* brig records: "5, answered signal for boats, manned and armed to assemble." But no boats manned and armed left the side of the *Dolphin*, for an excellent reason : "All our boats shot through and swamped; could not comply with signal. Found killed, Mr. William G. Andreas, J. Nash and C. N. T. J. Wilson, A.B.'s, W. Collier, ordinary, Charles Girvan, boy; wounded, 12. Shots in hull, 31 : through the foremast 1, through the mainboom 2; the flying jibboom shot away; spare topsail yard and jibboom shot away; 5 shrouds of fore rigging, etc." In the case of the *Dolphin* it was only remarkable that she did not receive more damage and lose more men than she did, considering the fact that she was aground for an hour under fire from the batteries. The vessel that suffered most severely was the *San Martin*; out of her small complement she had 10 killed and 25 wounded. The steamships seem to have suffered the least severely during the fight, which may be easily accounted for on the supposition that during the whole time they were on the move, while at the same time the sailing vessels

trying to get into action, bothered by a swiftly running current and light, fluky and variable airs, were continually having to anchor and present a fixed target to the guns on shore.

Steam, it will be seen, in spite of the fact of the ideas of Jonathan Hulls mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, was still at the time of the boom at Obligado in its infancy. Steamers in the practice of those days were tender plants which required careful nursing and sheltering, both from the assaults of the enemy and the roughness of the weather. There has probably never been anything invented by man since the world began that has been regarded with the same mixture of suspicion and dislike as the marine steam engine. As time went on, and the old wooden walls were superseded by those of iron (to be, in their turn, replaced with those of steel) the old ideas still lingered. The hulls might be of a different material, but the sailor still clung to his masts, his yards, and his sails ; long after they had become not only absolutely useless for the purpose of propelling his ship, but were also a positive danger in time of action, affording as they did all the materials for a first-class bonfire.

And what is more than all this, the love for the sailing ship and all that she stands for, is not dead even at the present day. Not long ago the writer of these lines met one of our youngest and most distinguished captains now on the active list of the Navy. This officer told him that, being in Australia, he was obliged to leave the modern cruiser that he then commanded and to sail for the Pacific Islands on a cruise in a venerable relic of a sloop that had been left out on the station

awaiting the time that she should either be sold out of the service or broken up, and this relic was fitted with the masts and yards of her day. The captain and his first lieutenant were the only persons of any sort or kind in the ship's company who had ever been trained in the management of a sailing craft; to the men she was as strange, and indeed much stranger than the *Santa Maria* (the ship in which Columbus sailed to America in 1492) would have been to a sailor of, say, 1870. The captain was afraid that his men would regard this return to the conditions of bygone generations with which they were totally unacquainted—and which further could be of no possible use to them in furthering their careers in the service in the future—as a most unmitigated bore and trouble. The result, he said, was exactly the opposite to what he had anticipated. The modern mariner took to the old game as a duck takes to the water. In the words of the captain, "they loved it"; they took an immense pride and interest in their new work, and, what was more, "although they were a fine smart lot of fellows before their sailing cruise, they themselves were the first to admit that they were twice the men when it was over." They had had an experience which, in the ordinary run of the Navy nowadays, could never have come in their way; and every man who had gone through the really strenuous time, in which they had learned to be seamen in the old-fashioned meaning of the word, felt that he was as good again as those of his fellows who had not had his luck.

The old training is dead and buried, we are never likely to see it revived; yet there are modern nations like the Germans who still consider it worth the money

to give some experience to their seamen in this manner. There are certain qualities that can never be acquired by the sailorman who has never striven to prove himself "the smartest man aloft who ever put his head above a deadeye," as the old timers used to say; who has never known the glory of being "captain of a top" or tasted the rapture of being "first ship" when the fleet was at drill aloft. We have been forced "to move with the times," but never again will the British bluejacket "get such a move on him" as he did in the old days. It has been a reproach in the eyes of some critics that the British officer and the British seaman were apt in the old days to merge their military qualities as fighting men in their pride of mere seamanship; and no doubt there was something in the criticism. There was, all the same, this much to be said for their method: that there was nothing that you could not ask the sailor to do, and very few things that in the end he could not accomplish. If you had asked one of these old-time ships' companies to put the monument on top of the dome of St. Paul's, the boatswain would gravely have rigged a pair of sheerlegs and set to work!

There is one quality perhaps in which the sailor does not shine, and that is as a horseman. Many years ago there was a midshipman in the Mediterranean who had a dispute with a Greek tavern-keeper, who lived some five miles inland from the coast of one of the Greek islands. What the controversy was about is lost in the mists of antiquity; but the midshipman determined to be even with his foe. His methods are not to be commended, let that be clearly understood; they were, however, decidedly practical. He hired twenty horses, he

enlisted the services of twenty bluejackets. Then one fine afternoon the party landed, mounted, and galloped helter-skelter over the plain to their objective, the tavern of the Greek. The midshipman led the way, and the faster he galloped the more of his men fell off; until at last he was forced to call a halt and collect men and horses and make a fresh start. Nobody was hurt, though they averaged some five falls apiece. At last they got to the tavern, a rickety, ramshackle wooden place, which they pulled down and then returned the way that they had come. The Greek was naturally exasperated; he complained to the authorities, and the midshipman was tried by court-martial. He made an eloquent and moving defence, in the course of which he said that many as were the admirable qualities of the British sailor, his experience went to show that, as a cavalry force, seamen were entirely unreliable. He had no further chance of testing his theories concerning the mariner, as an unsympathetic Court dismissed him from the service.

CHAPTER XII

THE PROGRESS OF THE BRITISH BATTLESHIP, FROM H.M.S. *WARRIOR*, 1860, TO H.M.S. *IRON DUKE*, 1914

We need not enter into a detailed history of when, where, how, and why the naval authorities of bygone generations decided to plate the sides of warships with iron, as on this subject alone a whole book could be written. One thing was apparent from the very first, and that was that it would be quite impossible to cover the sides of the three-decked and two-decked ships of war in this fashion; as so much would be required to spread out over the enormous surface of the sides of these vessels, that they would probably sink before the operation of armour-plating them was completed. But before any ship was built, experiments were conducted with the 68-pounder gun, then (that is in the year 1859) the most powerful gun afloat, and it was discovered that an iron plate $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in thickness, backed by 18 inches of teak, could not be penetrated at 200 yards. Having decided this point, the next thing to take into consideration was in what form the new "ironclad" was to be built. Eventually it was decided that she was to take the shape of a frigate; that is to say, a ship which carries guns on her maindeck alone; or in other words, with

one tier of guns below her upper deck. According to this idea, a new ship, which was named the *Warrior*, was built at the Thames Iron Works, Blackwall, from the designs supplied by the department of the Controller of the Navy, Rear-Admiral Robert Spencer Robinson. Her dimensions were as follows: 350 feet long; 58 feet beam; depth of hold, 21 feet 1 inch; and draught of water aft, 26 feet. She was 6109 tons, was engined by John Penn & Son of Greenwich, her speed was 14·35 knots, she carried a complement of 705 men, and her total cost, including engines, was £356,693. It will be seen from this price that even the first ironclad that ever was built for the Royal Navy was far from being cheap, and, as we all know, the price of warships has been rising ever since. One of our most modern battleships costs about two and a half millions sterling, or more than seven times as much as the *Warrior*, costly as she was supposed to be when she took the water on 29th December 1860, the date upon which she was launched. She was, of course, fully rigged as a ship. The picture which is here given of her is not a work of art, but it is an absolutely accurate drawing to scale. She and her sister ship, the *Black Prince*, were very handsome vessels, and with splendid accommodation on board both for officers and men. The weight of the armour in the *Warrior* troubled her designers not a little. They found that it was impossible to plate her all the way along, and had to be content with armour that extended only over the middle part of the ship, covering a little more than half her length. The design included placing an armoured bulkhead across the ship at either end, where the armour on the sides terminated, leaving the ends

unprotected. She was therefore a floating square box of iron, in which her battery was enclosed, with wooden ends on which there was no more protection than there was to any frigate of the old days. Her armament consisted of thirty-two 68-pounder guns. Weight of broadside, 1084 pounds.

The *Warrior* was the first of the ironclads; the parent ship, so to speak, of all those battleships by which she has been succeeded. In the days in which she was built she was naturally experimental, and the building of wooden men-of-war was not abandoned for many a long year after this. All the same, even in the construction of the wooden ships, great alterations had been made in ship-building, iron being substituted internally for many constructional details where wood was exclusively used before. One of these ships was the frigate *Narcissus*, built at the same time as the *Warrior* in Devonport Dockyard, from the designs of the department of the Controller, Captain Baldwin Walker. She was a screw frigate of 400 horse-power, with a speed of 10·5 knots, and was 228 feet long; extreme breadth, 51 feet 3 inches; draught of water, 22 feet 10 inches; tonnage, 2665, and carried 28 guns. When we say that the *Narcissus* had a speed of 10·5 knots, this refers to her steaming speed. As a matter of fact, she and her consorts, other similar frigates built about the same period, were formed into flying squadrons—one of which went round the world in the early seventies—which scarcely ever steamed at all; and were sternly discouraged from burning coal by the Admiralty in power at the time.

The *Galatea* — which was commanded by H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, in a cruise round the world as a

single ship—the *Ariadne*, the *Immortalité*, were all ships of this class, and the last named was probably the fastest ship that ever sailed the seas, taking into consideration all conditions of wind and weather. Some sailing ships are at their best in light breezes, others prefer half a gale of wind, but the ship that does equally well, no matter whether it be rough or smooth, is rare indeed, and of such was "the old *Immortalité*" as she was proudly and affectionately called by those who sailed in her. You couldn't put her wrong, they were accustomed to say; blow high, blow low, it was all one to the frigate, that in all her career at sea never met with anything afloat that she could not sail round.

A little later on ships began to be built of iron exclusively, sheathed with wood and coppered, of which the corvette *Volage* is an instance. She was 2322 tons, with engines of 1600 h.p., and she carried 10 guns in broadside batteries.

Besides ironclads, frigates, corvettes, and sloops, there were in the Navy from 1870 onwards till well into the present century, a very large number of gunboats serving all over the world, craft of from 460 tons upwards to about 750 tons, which were mostly commanded by Lieutenants, and which did the State good service in their generation. But all the time the naval architects were improving the ironclad, and our principal fleets in the Mediterranean and the English Channel were composed of vessels of this type. All the same, the sailors would not give up their beloved masts and sails, which, truth to tell, had become not only quite useless to propel these heavy lumbering ships through the water, but would have been a positive danger in a fleet action, from

the danger of wreckage fouling the screws by which the ships were actuated.

For generations, during the sailing era pure and simple, the form of the larger men-of-war varied scarcely at all. The two-decker with guns numbering 60 to 74 (the 74 was the most common of all) were the most frequent type. Three-deckers, of course, there were, but until quite the end of this naval phase they were—comparatively—few in number. After the advent of the *Warrior*, however, all this was changed; the naval architects invented one type after another of big ships until the number of them was nearly equalled by the differences that they presented in tonnage and armament. All this time, too, the artillerist was keeping pace by inventing new and improved guns. The battle between the gun and the armour has gone on ever since the first ironclad was launched; that is to say, whether the projectile from the gun should penetrate the armour, or whether the armour should keep out the shot. This contest is never-ending, and it may be said roughly that no matter how well the builder of armour plates may succeed, his antagonist who makes the guns always comes up with him and finds a gun and a projectile that will pierce the new plate.

Reams of paper might be covered with descriptions of the different ships that have been invented, built, served the State for a period, and have then reached that dismal goal, the scrap heap, to which all modern ships are bound in the end. It will, however, suffice for our purpose here to speak of what may be called the really modern Navy. Up to the year 1891 many powerful and admirable ships had been built; but as a rule

they had been constructed singly, or at most in a batch of two vessels, and then something different again had been placed upon the building slips.

But by this time much experience had been gained with the new form of ship construction that had been begun at Blackwall with the *Warrior* in 1860, and it was decided to build ships in batches, each ship in the batch to be exactly similar to her sisters. And so in the year that we have mentioned we come to the *Royal Sovereign* class of seven ships. They were an immense advance on anything that had gone before.

Ten years before, the largest battleship was the *Inflexible*, of 11,500 tons, which was the last of the "ironclads" to be rigged in the manner of the sailing ship. It was she, indeed, who finally made it clear that the masts and yards must go. Rigged as a brig, with a mainyard 105 feet in length, she became totally unmanageable when sail was made upon her in a heavy breeze, and charged about the surface of the ocean like a wounded marine buffalo, to the obvious danger of the ships with which she was in company. After this masts and yards died a swift and painless death, and were only retained in brigs and sloops used for the training of young officers and boys. Some years ago even this last manifestation of the old-world seaman's art was discontinued.

The tonnage of the ships of which we are now speaking increased to 14,200, their armament consisting of 13·5 and 6-inch guns: two of the former at each end of the ship in turrets; and ten of the latter, five on each broadside.

Let us now explain exactly what is meant by a 13·5

and a 6-inch gun. Guns are described in this way in the Navy for the sake of convenience. When you say 13·5, the meaning is that the diameter of the bore of the gun is 13½ inches. When you mention a 6-inch gun, again the meaning is that that figure represents the diameter of the bore. Also guns are spoken of in this way, "a 40-calibre 12-inch"; that means to say, that the particular gun thus described is 40 calibres in length, and as the calibre is 12 inches it is obvious that the gun is 40 feet in length.

It is necessary to have some sort of notation of guns, and this is found to be the simplest. Perhaps the question may be asked, "Why bother to talk about a 40-calibre 12-inch; after all, are not the words '12-inch' sufficient without further description?" The answer is, No; because there are no less than four descriptions of this particular gun: a 35-calibre, which weighs 46 tons; a 40-calibre, which weighs 50 tons; a 45 calibre, which weighs 58 tons; and a 50-calibre which weighs 67 tons.

There was another quality which distinguished the *Royal Sovereigns*, and this was their greatly increased speed: they were built to steam 17½ knots, and this was not a mere paper speed, for it was actually achieved by these vessels. It was an immense advance in this respect, and if a personal reminiscence may be pardoned, the writer will never forget the first occasion that he saw a big man-of-war proceeding at this speed. It was at the Rock of Gibraltar, and the *Royal Sovereign*, then the flagship of the Channel Fleet, came dashing past Europa Point—which is the southern end of the Rock that juts out like the prow of some great ship into the blue water of the Straits—and the observer was standing

on the shore as she came by. It may be explained that here the water is very deep, and the battleship was so close that it looked as if one might have pitched a biscuit on to her deck. It was a lovely day in early spring, with a blue sea and a bluer sky, and the sight of this enormous creature rushing by, as it were at one's very feet, made one wish to wave one's hat and cheer, so exhilarating was the spectacle.

As briefly as we can we will come down to the present day; we note that the next ship on the list was less in tonnage and represented only herself; this was the *Renown*, of 12,350 tons, armed with 10-inch guns in her fore and after turrets, and with ten 6-inch on the broadside. The *Majestics*, of 14,900 tons, nine ships in all, came next; their armament was the same as the *Royal Sovereigns* in position; but they carried 12-inch guns in their turrets instead of 13·5, and two more 6-inch than the earlier ships. A very natural question here arises, Why 12-inch instead of the larger class of gun? The answer is that the newest form of 12-inch at that time was actually a more efficient weapon than the older and larger one. In 1897 came the *Canopus* class, in which we note a drop of nearly 2000 tons—from 14,900 to 12,950—the armament remaining the same. Next came the *Formidables*, three ships of 15,000 tons in 1898; the *Londons*, three ships, 15,000 tons, in 1899–1900; the *Duncans*, six ships, 14,000 tons, in 1901; the *Queen* and *Prince of Wales*, 15,000 tons, in 1902; after which there was a bound upward in tonnage.

All these ships resembled one another closely in their main armaments; that is to say, they had a turret in the bows with two big guns, a turret in the stern with

the same, and on their broadside were mounted 6-inch guns. In 1903–4–5 were built the eight ships of the *King Edward VII.* class, of 16,500 tons. These vessels differed from all those that had gone before them by carrying four 9·2-inch guns, each in a separate turret of its own, in addition to the usual four 12-inch and ten 6-inch guns; they were also faster by a knot and a half.

The next development of the battleship was in the *Lord Nelson* and *Agamemnon*, which vessels, discarding the 6-inch gun altogether, were armed with four 12-inch and ten 9·2.

The 12-inch throws a projectile weighing 850 lb.; the 9·2, one of 380 lb.; the 7·5, one of 200 lb.; the 6-inch, one of 100 lb.; the modern 13·5, one of 1400 lb.; and the 15-inch that is coming along in the *Queen Elizabeth* class, will throw one of 1920 lb., or more than five-sixths of a ton.

We frequently hear people speak of something as having marked an epoch; and very often this form of words is used concerning matters that are not really of very great importance. In the history of ship-construction, however, in the enormous influence that it had —not only on the entire rebuilding on different lines of our own Navy, but also on the revision of the ideas on battleship construction all over the world—the arrival of the *Dreadnought* in 1906 really did mark an epoch. As far back as 1903, in a most valuable book of reference on naval affairs, called *Fighting Ships*, conducted, written, and edited by Mr. Fred T. Jane, there appeared an article by the famous Italian naval constructor, the late General —then Colonel—Cuniberti, entitled "An ideal British

battleship," in which the principle of the *Dreadnought* was foreshadowed.

Let us now see what that principle is.

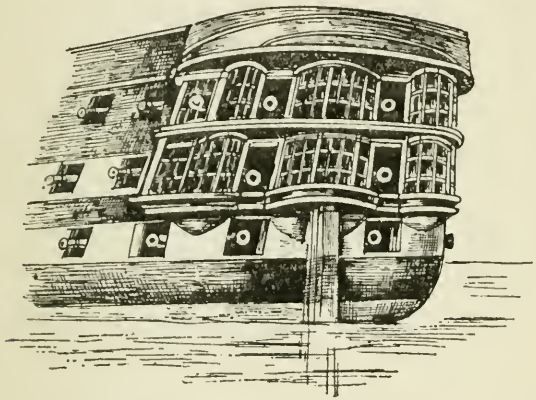
We have noted in all the battleships which came before the *Dreadnought* that they had in their main armaments—we have taken no account of the smaller guns—sometimes two and sometimes three different types of big guns.

The idea which was put forward by Cuniberti was to build a ship bigger by far, and much stronger than any existing war vessel; and that this unity should be armed with one type of gun and one only; and the type that he selected (we must recollect that he was writing eleven years ago) was the 12-inch, the gun which throws a projectile of 850 lb. weight. His idea was that in this manner not only would you get a far more powerful vessel, but also that you would simplify matters on board ship to a considerable extent, in that you would carry only one type of ammunition. The more different sorts of guns that are carried in any one ship, the more are the magazines and shell-rooms increased in number, and the more the crew is subdivided in time of action to supply the different charges and projectiles for the guns.

It was three years after this article was printed that the principle mentioned by Cuniberti was embodied in the *Dreadnought*. This ship was launched and completed for sea in 1906, and became the forerunner of all the ships in the world now known as *Dreadnoughts*—ships armed on the all-big-gun principle. Now Cuniberti had spoken of "an ideal British battleship" in his article, because he was of opinion that Great Britain was the only country rich enough to indulge in a luxury so costly

as the *Dreadnought*. In this, as we know, he was wrong, as all the nations have copied the notion of having only big guns in their most up-to-date ships. Therefore we find that since our own country built the *Dreadnought* there has been a complete change in what are called capital ships; that is to say, the largest warships that are constructed and commissioned.

The original *Dreadnought*—meaning the ship of that



Sir Robert Lepping's circular stern of three-decker, 1820.

name of 1906—is 17,900 tons, and carries ten 12-inch guns. These are disposed in pairs in five turrets, three of which are on the centre or keel line of the ship, and the other two on the broadside. She has, as secondary armament, twenty-four 12-pounders for use against attack by torpedo craft, and is fitted with turbine engines. Her speed is 21 knots, a great improvement on any of the battleships by which she was preceded. Her main armour belt is 11 inches in thickness amidships, tapering to 6 inches at the bow and 4 inches at

the stern, and she has an armoured deck 2¾ inches in thickness.

The *Dreadnought* was an experimental ship; and no sooner had the naval constructors got her afloat than they set to work to improve upon her, to build a ship more powerful still. The next ones to be constructed were the three *Temeraires*, which showed an advance in tonnage to 18,600, but in which there was no difference in the main armament; the date of these vessels is 1907. In 1908–9 came the three *St. Vincents*, of 19,250 tons, again with the same main armament. In 1909 the *Neptune*, a single ship of 20,200 tons, armed with ten 12-inch 50-calibre (67 tons) guns, the same as in the *St. Vincents*. (The earlier ships had the 45-calibre 12-inch, weighing 58 tons.)

The placing of the turrets in the *Neptune*, and in the two ships by which she was succeeded (*Colossus* and *Hercules*, 20,600 tons), differed from the earlier ships. Forward, in the bow end of the ship, these vessels carry one turret with a pair of guns; then comes a turret on the port side of the ship, and then one on the starboard. The starboard turret is so placed that it can fire across the deck to port; and the port turret is so placed that it can fire across the deck to starboard; these turrets are what is called *en echelon*. In the after part of these ships are two turrets superimposed; this means that one is on so much a higher level than the other, that it can be fired over its neighbour if it be desired to shoot right astern; while of course both turrets can be fired on either beam. Therefore in these ships the constructors have so arranged the armament that the guns can all be fired from the same side at the same time. There is, however,

PLATE XVI.

UPPER DECK OF H.M.S. *LONDON*, SHOWING 12-INCH GUNS.

SUBMARINE IN MIDDLE, WITH FOUR-FUNNELLED CRUISER ON LEFT, AND BATTLESHIP ON RIGHT.

this disadvantage, that one of the *echelon* turrets will be firing across the deck, setting up enormous strains as the gun is fired. The breadth of the ship is 86 feet, the length of the gun is 50 feet; there will be between 30 and 40 feet of deck across which the explosion of the charge will go. As the weight of the charge for the gun is 307 lb., and as it is composed of the high explosive known as cordite, we may easily imagine the terrible blast which will sweep across the deck when the gun is fired.

We now come to the four ships of the *Orion* class, which embody several new features. To begin with, they are considerably longer, wider, and heavier, being 22,500 tons. Also their armament is increased, as they carry 13·5-inch guns, which makes an enormous difference not only in the weight of the guns and the turrets in which they are mounted, but also in the weight of the ammunition. Whereas in the 12-inch guns carried by the *Colossus*, the weight of the gun is 67 tons, projectile 858 lb., and charge 307 lb.,—the 13·5 mounted in the later ships account for 67 ton weight of gun, 293 lb. weight of charge, and 1250 lb. weight of projectile. The reason that the heavier type of gun weighs no more than its 12-inch sister, is that the latter is a 45-calibre weapon, the former a 50-calibre. The last mark of 13·5 weighs 76 tons and throws a projectile of 1400 lb. with a charge of 297 lb. The reasons for the differences in the weight of the charges cannot be gone into here, as they have to do with the technical side of the art of the artillerist. The principal and most important difference that the *Orions* show over those that have gone before is in the disposition of their armament. The great aim

of the constructor has been to make a ship that could use all her heavy weapons on either side indifferently. In the *Orions* this has been achieved, for in these vessels there are two superimposed turrets forward, two aft, and one amidships; all these are on the centre line, and can be used indifferently on either beam.

Dating 1911, come the *King George V's*, four ships with the same arrangement of guns, but these weapons are of that 13·5 type which themselves weigh 76 tons, and which throw the 1400 lb. projectile; their tonnage is 25,000.

We now come to the last ships that at the time of writing have been commissioned for service: the *Iron Duke*—the name-ship of a class of four vessels—having just had the flag of the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet transferred to her from the *Neptune*. They are 26,400 tons, and have the same main armament; the difference is that for a secondary armament,—which is the name given to the smaller guns carried, and which are for use against torpedo attack,—she mounts 6-inch guns instead of the 4-inch carried by the *King George V's*. The *King George* has twenty 4-inch, the *Iron Duke* has twelve 6-inch. The projectile for the 4-inch weighs 31 lb. and that for the 6-inch, 100 lb.

We must not close this chapter without a brief reference to the ships known as battle-cruisers. They are in effect battleships, but they differ from vessels called by that name in the fact that their armaments are smaller—in the number of big guns that they carry —their protection is less; that is to say, that their armour plates are not so thick. But to make up for these changes their engines are far more powerful, and their

speed is far greater. If we take the average battleship speed—meaning, of course, full speed—to be 21 knots, the average full speed of the battle-cruiser is 28 knots for the first of their class to be built—the three *Invincibles* of 17,250 tons, armed with eight 12-inch guns. The *Indefatigable* and *New Zealand*, which came next (1909-11, the *Invincibles* date 1907), are 18,750 tons, with the same armament but with a full speed of just over 29 knots. The *Lion* class, of three ships (1911), are 26,350 tons, mount eight 13·5-inch guns, and are credited with speeds varying from 31½ to 33 knots. The *Tiger*, of 30,000 tons, is not yet completed. It is understood that this experiment of building battle-cruisers is not to be gone on with, the authorities having decided that better value is gained by building battleships.

The next form that the British battleships is about to take is that of the *Queen Elizabeth* and her four sisters: *Valiant*, *Warspite*, *Barham*, and *Malaya*. These ships are to be about 27,500 tons, and are to carry 15-inch guns, throwing a projectile weighing 1920 lb., the weight of the gun itself being 100 tons. The estimated average cost of these ships is £2,500,000 each; this works out at £90 per ton. The *Dreadnought*, first of all the all-big-gun ships of 17,900 tons, cost £1,790,000, or at the rate of £100 per ton. When we compare her with the latest ships we see how very much better value the country is now getting for its money than it did when the monster ship of modern days was in the experimental stage.

The cost of the *Warrior*, first of all the ironclads, works out at just under £58 per ton.

CHAPTER XIII

TWO GREAT DISASTERS—THE LOSS OF H.M.S. *CAPTAIN* OFF FINISTERRE, 7TH SEPTEMBER 1870; THE LOSS OF H.M.S *VICTORIA* OFF THE COAST OF SYRIA ON 22ND JUNE 1893

As long as men have used the sea—and they have used it as long as we have any records by which we can go—there have been from time to time terrible disasters. There are several so well known that they occur instantly to the memory. At Spithead in 1782 the *Royal George* was overset in a squall, and "Kempenfelt went down with twice four hundred men."[1] In 1852 the British ship known as the *Birkenhead* struck on a rock off the Cape of Good Hope and 400 British soldiers perished; not, however, before they had proved of what stuff a well-disciplined regiment is composed. With the ship rapidly sinking under their feet they fell in, as if on parade, while the women and children were got into the only two available boats. The ship went down with the men still standing in their ranks, but it is one of those stories that can never die as long as Englishmen take pride in the honour of their race. This episode has been immortalised by Sir Francis Hastings Doyle in a poem entitled "The loss of the

[1] Campbell, who wrote the poem, was in error in his figures; there were 1200 souls on board the *Royal George* when she foundered.

Birkenhead"; and well did that fine poet commemorate the deed that rang through England like a trumpet call:

"So we made women with their children go
The oars ply back again, and yet again;
Whilst inch by inch the drowning ship sank low,
Still, under steadfast men.

What follows why recall?—The brave who died,
Died without flinching in that bloody surf,
They sleep as well beneath that purple tide
As others under turf.

They sleep as well! and, roused from their wild grave,
Wearing their wounds like stars, shall rise again,
Joint heirs with Christ, because they bled to save
His weak ones not in vain."

We might, of course, multiply instances, but we have only room to deal with two losses of modern times, each equally terrible. These are the capsizing and sinking of H.M.S. *Captain* off Finnisterre on the night of 6th to 7th September in the year 1870; and the ramming of H.M.S. *Victoria* by H.M.S. *Camperdown* in the Mediterranean on 22nd June 1893, off the coast of Syria.

There were in the case of the *Captain* only 18 men saved out of a company of 500, and two years after the occurrence the writer was shipmates, as a youthful cadet, with two of the survivors; from one of them, then Mr. James Ellis, boatswain (at the time of the accident gunner's mate of the *Captain*), he heard the story. A finer seaman and a more gallant fellow than Ellis never trod a plank; his nerve was quite unaffected by the terrible disaster it was his ill fortune to have experienced.

At the time that she was lost the *Captain* was the last word in new invention: a turret-ship of 4272 tons, mounting six guns, four of which were in turrets, one forward and one aft. She had engines of 900 h.p., and a crew of 500 men. Her inventor, Captain Cowper Coles, went to sea in her to watch the behaviour of this darling child of his brain, in which he had the most supreme confidence. She was commanded by Captain Burgoyne. There had been considerable competition among naval officers to get appointed to her, and those who had succeeded were envied and considered most lucky by their brother officers.

In August 1870 the Channel and the Mediterranean fleets met at Gibraltar for the purpose of undertaking a combined cruise in the Atlantic. Admiral Sir Alexander Milne, flying his flag in the *Lord Warden*, was in supreme command. It may here be set down that the *Captain* was rigged as a ship; that is to say, with yards on all her three masts, and that she was what the sailor calls "heavily rigged," meaning that her masts were unusually tall, her yards unusually square, and in consequence that she presented a great area of canvas to the wind when sail was made. One of the special objects of the combined Channel and Mediterranean fleets was to try rate of sailing and to see how the brand new turret-ship would behave in a breeze of wind. The combined fleets left Gibraltar on 19th August, but it was not until 6th September that there was any wind to speak of; for during the whole of the intervening period calms and light airs prevailed. Sir Alexander Milne had received special instructions "to report on the capabilities of the *Captain*, the *Monarch* (another turret-ship), and the

Hercules (a new broadside ironclad). As to what took place between 19th August—the day upon which the combined squadrons left Gibraltar—and 6th September, we are not here concerned; they were utilised in the drills and exercises of the fleet. The ships in company were the *Lord Warden*, *Captain*, *Bellerophon*, *Inconstant*, *Warrior*, *Bristol*, *Minotaur*, *Northumberland*, *Monarch*, *Agincourt*, and *Hercules*.

The *Captain* had been on an experimental cruise before this, and all on board had expressed themselves pleased with her performances on this occasion, although there seems to have been an underlying current of distrust of her among some of the higher officials, particularly those of the department of the constructor at the Admiralty. The Admiral was particularly anxious to have an opportunity of seeing how the new vessel would behave under sail in a breeze of wind, and on the morning of 6th September he decided, from the look of the weather, that he was likely to have the opportunity for which he had been waiting so long. He accordingly signalled to Captain Burgoyne that he would come on board accompanied by his Flag-Captain and Flag-Lieutenant; and at 9.30 that morning carried out his intention. Arrived on board, he proceeded to make a minute and exhaustive inspection of every part of the ship, including engine-room, stokehold, and screw alley; which lasted during the whole of the forenoon. At 1.30 p.m. the squadron made sail to a smart breeze, and a trial of sailing was continued until five o'clock. In this period the wind freshened considerably, and some of the ships had to take in their royals.

The Commander-in-Chief then prepared to return to

his own ship. Mr. Ellis said that at this time there was a good deal of wind and "a nasty jump of a sea on ; and that Captain Burgoyne, seeing that the Admiral was likely to have a very wet and unpleasant passage back to his flagship, tried to persuade him to remain for the night on board the *Captain.* To this the Commander-in-Chief would not assent ; his boat was got alongside, he shook hands with Captain Burgoyne—little thinking that it was the last time he should ever see and speak again with that gallant but ill-fated officer—and was rowed back in the gathering gloom to his own vessel. From this time on till midnight the weather appears to have got steadily worse, and sail in the fleet was shortened accordingly.

We now come to the time of the actual catastrophe. At midnight the ship was under easy canvas ; that is to say, double-reefed fore and maintop sails and foretop-mast staysail ; this was all the sail that she was showing when she capsized. Mr. James May, the gunner, who was the only officer saved, reported his movements to the court-martial subsequently held, as follows :

"At 0.15 a.m. (a quarter past midnight) of the 7th instant, I was disturbed by marines talking outside my cabin ; I got up, and took a lantern to look at the guns in the turrets. I passed the engineers' bathroom and saw one of the engineers washing, and addressed a remark to him. This fixed the time at from 15 to 20 minutes past midnight. I then went into the after-turret and the guns were all right. Immediately I got inside I felt the ship heel over deeper and deeper, and a heavy sea strike her on the weather side. The water flowed in as I got through the pointing hole only to find myself

overboard. I struck out and succeeded in reaching the steam pinnace, which was bottom up, on which were Captain Burgoyne and five or six others."

We will leave the narrative of Mr. May for the moment and turn to that of James Ellis, gunner's mate: "I came on deck at twelve o'clock on Wednesday morning, midnight, 6th instant. The watch was being mustered. The captain called me on to the bridge and told me to take a trustworthy man I could depend on and go and put the iron tops on the turrets. He also said: 'Come and report *to me mind* when you are finished.' I called James Frost to me to come and cover the fore-turret, but I never saw him afterwards. I walked forward to the weather gangway, and crossed to the lee side of the boats on the hurricane deck, when I felt the ship give a lurch to leeward. The water came up through the grating of the hurricane deck, and over the hammock netting. After the captain told me to cover the turrets I heard him ask how much the ship was heeling; I did not hear the answer. He sang out, 'Let go the foretopsail halyards; plenty of hands go forward and man the downhaul'; afterwards I heard him order, 'Let go the maintopsail halyards,' and after that, 'lee topsail sheets.' I heard this as I was going forward. When the water came up I held on to the iron gratings, as the launches were over me. I went down with the ship. I felt the boats graze my back as they floated over; I don't think they were lashed. I let go and came up, and seeing the boat about 15 yards off I struck out for her and got into her. Two men were already in her—Thomas Kernan" (this man was shipmate with the writer and Mr. James Ellis

in the *Ariadne* two years after) "and Harry George. I saw the ship was then bottom up; she went down in two or three minutes."

We will now leave Ellis's narrative for the present, to explain concerning the boats. Above the hurricane deck the launch was stowed in crutches,—wide-spreading iron arms which are made exactly to the shape of the boat and into which she is lowered when hoisted inboard. Inside the first launch, the boat in the crutches, was another and smaller boat called the second launch, and inside her again was the galley. These boats fitted one inside the other like puzzle boxes. Over the top of the galley went a canvas cover, which completely covered her and the second launch and was laced to the gunwale of the first launch. Therefore when by the action of the ship capsizing the last-named boat slid into the water, she had the other two boats inside her, and these were kept in their place by the afore-mentioned canvas cover. The steam pinnace was stowed in another set of crutches; she also floated off, but remained bottom upwards.

David Dryburgh, an Able Seaman belonging to the watch on deck, heard the captain ask: "How many degrees is she heeling?" and the answer was, "Eighteen degrees." "The ship was heeling over very much; I thought that she would right; she tried to right." There is something pathetic in this simple sentence, "She tried to right"; it seems to voice the sympathy of the sailor with his ship, for he speaks of her as a sentient creature; one which had made a gallant effort and failed; one to which his heart went out in her failure. His evidence then continues: "When I found that she would not right I went over the weather netting and

hauled myself along the hurricane deck to the maindeck by the main tack, the ship being then on her beam ends. I stood there a few seconds to see if the ship would right, and gradually, as the ship turned over, walked over the ship's bottom and finally I stood upon the bilge-piece, the seas closing over me." He was then washed clear and reached the boat.

There is in this man's tale something that grips the attention and rivets it on this first part of an appalling tragedy. In the simplest language he conveys to us a picture of horror that pages of description could not improve; as the ship went slowly over he literally walked, first over her side, as it lay parallel with the water when she was on her beam ends, then on to her bottom as she turned completely over. Finally he stood upon her bilge-piece, which in her capsized condition would have been the highest part of her out of the water, and then, "the seas closed over me"! He even remembered his foot tripping in a valve opening as he stumbled along in the darkness and the raging waters over this corpse of a ship that a minute before had been his home and that of five hundred other British sailors.

We will now go back to the story as told by James Ellis. "There were a great many men in the water; we pulled in as many as we could reach. The galley being in the second launch, and that boat in the first launch, and a cover over all, acting as a sail, we drifted to leeward. I was cutting away the cover when a man named Freeman said, 'Don't you do that, but go aft and take command, as none of us know what to do.' I did go aft and take charge. I said 'Cut away the cover and let the boat sink,' by which I meant the first launch.

We all got into the second launch; the first launch went from under us.

"I ordered a steer oar to be got out. The captain of the forecastle, Lewis Werry, and Charles Tregenna got one out; we steered for the steam pinnace, it was to leeward of us. The other men, twelve in number, were meanwhile throwing out the stay tackle." (This was a heavy purchase kept in the boat used for hoisting it in and out of the ship.) "While doing this we passed close under the stern of the steam pinnace, bottom up. I touched her and tried to hold her, but could not. I saw the captain, the gunner, and five others on her; the gunner jumped into the launch, followed by three others. An oar was held out to the captain. He said, 'For God's sake, lads, hold on to your oars, you will want them.' I can't say if he jumped or not. We were now to leeward of the steam pinnace, and the gunner took charge, and ordered the galley and both launch masts to be hove overboard. We then tried to get back to the pinnace, but could not. We shipped a tremendous sea, which washed a man named Myers overboard. We then got the boat before the wind as our only chance."

Mr. May, the gunner, says: "I saw the ship turn bottom up and sink stern first; the last I saw of her was the prow. The whole time from her turning over to sinking was but from five to ten minutes, if so much. Shortly after I saw the launch drifting close to us who were on the pinnace" (the pinnace, it must be remembered, was bottom up, and those who were on her were clinging to her keel). "She was but a few yards from us. I called out, 'Jump, men, it is your last chance.' I jumped, and succeeded with three others in reaching her. I do

not know if Captain Burgoyne jumped or not. I was under the impression he did, but others in the launch did not think so; anyhow, he never reached her. We then set to work to clear the launch of her superfluous gear. At the time there were 18 souls besides myself in her. We threw the galley out, also the stay tackle, masts and other gear which were stowed in her, retaining only the oars, nine in number, baling her out with our caps. We tried to close the pinnace with the intention of saving the captain, but the sea would not admit of it, and reluctantly we were obliged to bear up. At this time the sea was so heavy that a man named Myers was washed out of the boat and lost, having only that moment said, 'Now, lads, I think we are all right.' I remembered the land was to leeward and tried to make for it.

"We all manned the oars and double banked them" (this means rowing two men to one oar), "one being used as a steer oar: the rudder, being of no avail in the sea, was unshipped. Charles Tregenna, Leading Seaman, worked the steer oar admirably for a consecutive ten hours. I and others tried to relieve him, but none of us managing it as well as he did, we resigned it entirely to him. After twelve hours' hard work without food or water we reached Finisterre, whence we removed to Corcubion, and were taken on board the *Monarch* on the afternoon of the 9th instant. I cannot speak too highly of the behaviour of the men, both whilst in the boat and afterwards on shore."

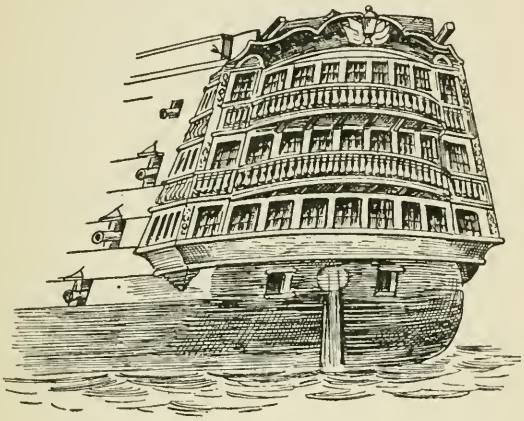
There is really very little to add to the story as told by those "whom God's high grace there saved from harm" on the fateful night. A new ship and a gallant

company were gone, as the eye-witnesses of the tragedy tell us, in between five and ten minutes, and only eighteen lived to tell the tale. Considering the weather that prevailed at the time of the accident, it is a miracle that anyone at all was saved. The logs of all the ships show that it was blowing a gale, and that there was a heavy sea running, while it was so dark that although the men on the bottom of the pinnace, before they came to the launch, saw a large ship go by not fifty yards off, and although they naturally all shouted at the tops of their voices, they were neither seen nor heard. A court-martial was in due course held on the survivors, and they were of course exonerated from any blame. Captain Burgoyne, it was believed, refused to leave the upturned steam pinnace until he had seen the rest into safety, with the result that he and several others drifted away from the launch and were never seen again.

Mr. James Ellis was promoted to the rank of boatswain; but his narrow escape at the time of the *Captain* disaster had no power to tame his gallant spirit, as was manifested shortly after when in mid-Atlantic a dreadful boat accident cost the lives of many of his shipmates in the frigate *Ariadne*. A man fell overboard, a boat was lowered to pick him up, and was capsized in the bad sea then running. Another boat in the act of being lowered went down by the run and tipped her entire crew at once into the water alongside. Ellis with a rope round his waist went overboard not once only, but several times, and was instrumental in saving men unable to swim. His recollection of the *Captain* and her loss was singularly clear, and he told the story of that dreadful night with the modesty that was a part of his brave and manly

nature. He died some years ago, not forgotten by those who had the privilege of his acquaintance, for he was one of those men who were an honour to that noble profession that he so truly adorned.

If the loss of the *Captain* were unexpected, and at the time that it happened created, naturally enough, a most painful sensation in England, the same can be most truthfully stated to have happened when it became



Square stern of three-decker, 1820.

known that H.M.S. *Victoria*, the flagship of the Mediterranean fleet, had come into collision with the *Camperdown* on 22nd June 1893, off the coast of Syria, and that Admiral Sir George Tyron and a large proportion of the crew of the battleship had been drowned. In this case it was no question of a vessel, overwhelmed by the waters and borne down by the wind, capsizing, but an unexpected collision on a fine day which resulted in the sinking of the flagship in full sight of all her companions in the fleet.

The other ships in the fleet besides the two mentioned—the *Camperdown* was the flagship of the second in command, Rear-Admiral Markham—were the *Nile*, *Dreadnought*, *Inflexible*, *Collingwood*, *Phœton*, *Edinburgh*, *Sans Pareil*, *Edgar*, *Amphion*, *Fearless*, and *Barham*. With what went before concerning the disposition of the fleet we need not trouble; what caused the disaster was that the Commander-in-Chief ordered the two lines in which the fleet was then disposed to be 6 cables apart.[1] The fleet was in columns of divisions in line ahead, which means two lines with ships following one another.

It had been pointed out to the Admiral that the manœuvre which he now intended to perform, which was to invert the lines by their turning inward the one towards the other, could not be performed on account of the ships being too close. The very shortest distance at which it was possible for the manœuvre to be performed was with the lines 8 cables apart, and even this distance would have left the barest margin of safety. All his officers confided in the ability of their Admiral, whom they admired and trusted implicitly; yet on this occasion no one knew why and for what reason this manœuvre was attempted. They could only imagine that he was trying something new, as he of all men was the last, so they imagined, to jeopardise his fleet. What induced him to make the signal and to order it to be carried out, will never be known, as the Admiral went down with his ship.

The manœuvre was attempted. The two ships, the *Victoria* and the *Camperdown*, approached one another;

[1] A cable is 100 fathoms, or 200 yards.

at the last moment their engines were put full speed astern to avoid a collision, but then it was too late. The *Camperdown's* stem struck the *Victoria* on the starboard bow and penetrated deeply into her sides. Everything was done that could be done, by the placing of collision mats and such means to prevent the inrush of water, but the wound to the ship was too vital, and almost immediately she began to sink. The nearest land was some $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles away, and towards this the head of the stricken ship was turned; or, to speak more correctly, an attempt was made to turn her, but her hydraulic pressure, which worked the helm, had been shut off by the accident and the rudder could not be moved.

Almost immediately she began to settle, and the Admiral said to his staff commander, "I think she is going," to which that officer replied, "Yes, sir, I think she is."

Then the Admiral turned to a midshipman who was on the bridge with him and said, "Don't stop here, youngster, go to a boat;" and as he spoke the ship capsized, flung her stern into the air, and went down in 80 fathoms of water.

It was found afterwards that almost exactly $10\frac{1}{2}$ minutes had elapsed from the time that the collision took place until the *Victoria* sank. The total loss of life was 22 officers and 350 men. The court-martial, which sat at Malta from the 17th to the 27th of July, acquitted Captain Bourke from all blame for the loss of his ship, and found that the collision resulted from the order given by the Admiral to turn the two divisions of the fleet 16 points inward when the columns were only 6 cables apart. Thus the opinion of the court confirmed that of every officer who had been a witness of the collision.

The men fell in on deck as ordered, and, most gallant of all, the engine-room staff remained at their posts and died to a man doing their duty. It was a fine smooth day, and it seemed impossible to the survivors in the other ships that all this should have happened in something under a quarter of an hour; and that all that remained of that proud vessel, their Admiral in whom their trust was so profound, and all the company of what was then the newest and most powerful of British battleships, should be represented by a pitiful minority of men saved, by a little floating wreckage, and a few bubbles on the surface of the ocean. As we have said, the Admiral went down with his ship, but before the final catastrophe came he said, "It is all my fault." Seldom has there been a greater tragedy of the sea, especially when we consider that it was caused by one blunder, which was quite inexplicable, by the man who was regarded as the ablest Admiral of his time.

CHAPTER XIV

SLAVERS AND SLAVE HUNTING—CRUISING IN PURSUIT—OF THE GREAT FIGHT THAT WAS FOUGHT OFF PEMBA BY LIEUTENANT FEGEN WITH AN ARMED SLAVE DHOW

THERE is one thing upon which our own country has a right to plume herself, and that is that she, and she alone, during the nineteenth century, set her face like a flint against the horrors of the slave trade. Not only did she do this, but she gave expression to the general sentiment of the English people by employing her men-of-war to hunt down the slavers and to free the slaves. Long after the slave trade had been practically dead on the west coast of Africa it continued to flourish on the eastern side of that continent; and this commerce had been for generations in the hands of the Arabs. There were certain markets in which their merchandise was sure to fetch good prices. In the old days before a check was put upon them, Zanzibar, Pemba, the great island of Madagascar, and Muscat, were certain to buy, while up the Persian Gulf beyond Muscat there were also persons who required slaves. The first question that arises is: From whence did the slaves come that were procured from Africa by the Arabs? secondly, How were they obtained?

The Arab, who was a trader in the palmy days, was not a man who obtained the commodities in which he dealt easily, or without danger. Even as the Englishman of all the ages has been a hunter of big game wheresoever it was to be found, so were these Arabs hunters of men. There was, however, this difference between them: that whereas the Englishman pursued his lions, his tigers, or his elephants for the fun that it gave him, the Arab pursued his men with the intent that, when he had caught them, they should prove to him a source of profit.

Africa has well been called "the Dark Continent." Until comparatively quite recent years the interior of this mighty land was practically unknown: it was inhabited by wild beasts and wilder men, among which latter warfare was a commonplace of existence, and bloodshed was the ordinary accompaniment of the lives that they led. It was this perpetual strife among tribes which adjoined one another that gave to the Arab slave trader the chance, of which he was not slow to avail himself, of securing that human flesh and blood in which he dealt, at the cheapest possible price.

From the earliest ages the Arabs have been warriors, and they turned their aptitude in this respect to most valuable account in eastern—as well as in western—Africa. The trader would land on the coast with his well-armed and equipped force, and would proceed to inquire into what Europeans would call "the political situation." That is to say, by means of spies and scouts, thrown out over a wide area of country, he would ascertain what tribes were at war and what at peace. If it

were discovered that two tribes were fighting, then the chief would march direct to the scene of action, and having arrived there would instantly offer his invaluable services to the stronger side. This, of course, was always done; as into the merits of the quarrel, or for what the rival tribes were contending, mattered not one halfpenny to the Arabs. What they wanted was slaves. The tribe strengthened by the accession to their ranks of the traders invariably won; as not only were these gentry an invaluable reinforcement in themselves, but they also furnished their temporary allies with arms of precision in the shape of rifles. The traders had plenty of money and bought such things at ridiculously low prices.

Let us set down how it was possible for them to do this, for a rifle as a rule is a fairly expensive article, even when bought in large numbers. Yet the Arabs were able to buy them at what the cheap-jack at a fair calls "knock-out prices." After the death and burial of the muzzle-loading gun all the great nations proceeded to arm their big battalions with rifles of a breech-loading type. As these weapons increased in accuracy better ones were provided, and the nations were re-armed. What then became of all the tens and hundreds of thousands of perfectly good rifles that had been discarded? Certain astute gentlemen saw their way plainly marked out before them to introduce modern improvements into Africa, and at the same time make a handsome fortune for themselves. As soon, therefore, as it became known that an army was discarding its present rifle for something better, the old ones were bought from the government that was making the change, at scrap-iron

prices, and were shipped off to Zanzibar,[1] Mozambique, and other places on the coast, where if they did not fetch two or three times the price at which they had been bought, the sellers were grievously disappointed. The tribesmen of Central Africa could only obtain these weapons through the Arabs, by whom they were bought wholesale.

Our traders, as we have said, joined up with the stronger side; and when matters reached a satisfactory conclusion by the defeat of the tribe against whom the Arabs were contending, these gentlemen adventurers claimed their reward. This was the larger proportion of the persons who had not been killed in the fighting. It will be seen that such an arrangement suited the victorious tribe admirably. Keeping only such a number of slaves for themselves as they could easily manage, they saw the rest of their foes disappear down country in the direction of the coast, with the comforting certainty that they were perfectly certain never to see any of them again. As bad as—if not even worse than—the fighting was the march that then began of the unfortunate defeated ones. If it happened to be an elephant country, in which ivory in the shape of elephants' tusks was procurable, the slaves would be laden with the cumbrous tusks. Even if they travelled unencumbered their lot was sufficiently wretched. Roped or chained together, men and women struggled in single file through the stifling heat of the jungle or the bitter cold of the scarps of mighty hills; starving, thirsty, hopeless, and miserable, goaded on by men who knew not what was meant by

[1] Of Zanzibar the Arabs had a proverb: "When you play the flute at Zanzibar all Africa, as far as the lakes, dances."

the word mercy. If they failed by the way, if exhausted nature could no longer hold out, then there came a swift ending to their sufferings, as a spear was thrust through them—the Arabs would not waste a cartridge on a slave—and their bones were left to whiten on that awful track that could be traced all along by the skeletons of those who had preceded the present caravan. It was always hurry, it was always drive, as the sooner the traders could get them to the coast and ship them, the sooner could they return for another consignment. Those who reached the seashore were instantly shipped in a dhow and dispatched to their destination.

We have now reached the Indian Ocean, where the man-of-war took a hand in attempting to stop this deplorable business. The duty of the ships was simple, if arduous. Briefly, their business was to cruise within certain defined limits; to overhaul every dhow that they saw; to cause her to lower her sail; to send on a boat to board, to see in the first place that she had no slaves on board (if she had she was instantly seized), and in the second to make sure that she was not engaged in this traffic. This could be easily ascertained from the internal fittings of the vessel. But it was not sufficient that the man-of-war herself should cruise. To increase the area of the operations that she could cover, her boats, manned, armed, and provisioned, cruised independently of her for weeks at a time; coming back at stated intervals to a rendezvous agreed upon, when they shipped more provisions and started once again on their weary round.

It comprised the best of hard work and the worst of bad food; for salt pork and biscuit, varied by salt beef

and biscuit, or the dreadful preserved meat of those days known as "Fanny Adams," washed down with one tot of rum per day, was not exactly luxurious fare, particularly in the blazing heat of the tropics. There was a legend in the Navy at that time that Fanny Adams had fallen into the boiler in which the preserved meat was being cooked, and had never been got out again. The truth of this remarkable legend is not vouched for, but it was known to every officer and man in the fleet. There is an old saying in the Navy that "we growls and goes," more remarkable for its truth than its grammar, and certain it was that it described those of us who spent our time in hunting down the slave dhow from Muscat to Mozambique.

And yet it was by no means all bad, for the command of the boats was in the hands of young lieutenants and subs. who were delighted to get away from the ship, and to taste that quasi-independence that was theirs, when once the topgallant-masts of the ship had sunk below the far horizon, where the stainless blue of those southern seas merged in the deep azure of the tropic sky.

Down in the Mozambique Channel the cruising was on the coast of Madagascar, up and down which the boats quested like hounds on a trail; while in mid-channel, between the mainland and the island, the ship, with her topgallant masts on deck, sailed slowly under her topsails and courses, watching for the dhows with their human cargo on board. Sometimes the monotony of the boardship life would be varied with a stay in port for a day or two, when the boats would come back and be hoisted up to dry after their long immersion, to paint

and repair; to get ready generally for the next cruise, starting the day after to-morrow. While this was in progress there were visits of state to be paid to local chiefs and notabilities—matters of high ceremony that do not fade from the memory of those whose amazing good fortune it was to participate in these international courtesies. Let us describe one which may stand as a sample for others.

The captain of the corvette and a sub. landed to make a formal call on the representative of the Queen of Madagascar, who had his official residence at the port of Majunga. It was known that the captain was coming, and as he landed he was received by a guard of honour. Out of Madagascar it may be stated with some confidence that no such guard of honour ever was seen. It consisted partly of Hovas—who are a singularly light-coloured race, and were then the ruling caste in the island, which has long since been annexed by France—and partly of Sakalavas, a coast tribe as black as your shoe. Like all primitive peoples the Hovas and the Sakalavas had, and no doubt still have, a great admiration for fine clothes glittering with gold lace. The only resplendent persons that they had ever seen wearing such garments were naval officers in their full dress; and it became the desire of every self-respecting Madagascan to array himself like one of these. Not many succeeded, as was natural in the circumstances, but the guard drawn up to receive the captain of the corvette on this occasion had risen superior to their fellow-countrymen. There were in all some twelve or fourteen men drawn up in two lines on the quay where the reception was to take place.

The captain stared at them. "Those fellows look mighty queer," he remarked.

The sub. chuckled. "Not much wonder, sir, they've all got naval officers' full-dress coats on."

"By the Lord, so they have," answered his amazed superior; "if you laugh when we land I'll court-martial you!"

"Suppose you laugh, sir?"

But the captain vouchsafed no response and stepped on shore with an iron visage.

"Queen of Madagascar present arms," said the officer of the guard all in one breathless bellow, waving a sword that he carried in his hand; he wore a sword belt, but the scabbard was missing. The officers looked at the guard of honour, and let it be set down to their eternal honour that both kept their countenances, though smothered sniggerings were distinctly audible from the crew of the captain's galley. Every man in that representation of the might of Madagascar wore the full dress coat of an English, a French, a Spanish, or a Portuguese naval officer. Some were admirals, some sub-lieutenants; some wore two epaulettes, some one, some none at all; the upstanding wool on the fuzzy heads of the Sakalavas was crowned with cocked hats; while in contrast to this the Hovas mostly assumed their own national headgear, which consists of a tall hat made of white straw. No one among them was prouder than he who displayed the ancient scarlet tunic of a full private in the Royal Marine Light Infantry. Most of the buttons, it is true, were missing, and had been replaced temporarily with thorns, but this did not seem to cause the wearer any anxiety. But the most

remarkable part of the whole parade was, that not one of those of which it was formed possessed a pair of trousers. The really well-dressed sported the Malay sarong, which is a kind of abbreviated—very much abbreviated—Scotch kilt, made of silk in gay colours. These formed a pleasing contrast to the dark blue and gold of the full-dress coats, while the effect was somewhat detracted from by those warriors who could only rise to the ordinary and rather dingy native loin cloth. From beneath sarong and loin cloth protruded long black or yellow legs which terminated in bare feet of a decidedly useful size.

After this display nothing mattered, and the captain and his sub. were able to go through with the elaborate reception which followed in a mud fort with unwinking gravity. But such distractions as these were the mere fringe and embroidery, the purple patches as it were, in the lives of those detailed by their fellow-countrymen to put an end to the slave trade on the east coast of Africa. Let us now see what one day's routine was like on board a boat detached for cruising?

It is daylight at six in the morning in the tropics; at that hour the sun pops up from below the horizon like a red-hot jack-in-the-box, determined to put in a heavy day's work—which he invariably does. At 5.30 a.m. the coxswain of the boat rouses the hands from their luxurious slumbers—on a bed consisting of the oars laid side by side—with a stentorian demand for them to "show a leg." If they do not respond with sufficient alacrity, he lets go the peak and throat halyards supporting the awning under which they have been sleeping, and nearly smothers them in the folds of canvas.

The men are awake in a moment, the awning is unlaced and furled, and by this time the ashen grey sky in the east has a pink tinge in it. Splash, splash, splash, white bodies glimmer in the gloom as one by one the men shed shirts and flannels and leap over the side. It is the only form of washing that they can do while boat cruising, and they would much sooner miss their dinner than their morning dip. The officer of the boat goes in over the stern, till all hands are overboard save the interpreter, who, being a coloured man, has no use for such nonsensical practices.

As with considerable personal effort the crew return on board, the sun rises. They struggle into their clothes —which, after all, consist only of a pair of trousers and a "flannel"—and then hoist the mainsail. Next the anchor is got up, the head sails hoisted, and with a gentle breeze from off the land she stands out to sea. All this time the only marine in the crew has been lighting the cooking stove that shares the platform of stout oak planking before the mast with the carriage of the 7-pounder gun that is carried by the boat. The gun itself, lashed up in a tarpaulin bag, is secured under the after-thwart; and is regarded by everyone as a most unmitigated nuisance. In no conceivable circumstances could it be the slightest use, yet there it is. Not only is the gun there and the carriage which blocks up all the forepart, but there are also the bulky boxes of ammunition belonging to it that have to be stowed away. In addition to this abomination there were the arms of the men, rifle and cutlass stowed in beckets secured underneath the thwart on which each man sat; there was the rifle and pistol ammunition—the latter for the pistols

carried by the officer and coxswain; there was the medicine chest, principally filled with bandages and quinine; a box containing rockets and portfires; each man's small bag containing a change of clothing; there was a barrico containing rum; four larger ones containing water; several ditto containing salt pork; tins of "Fanny Adams"; and tin-lined cases of biscuit. There was also the boat's awning and the thin wire warp to which it was secured (running round outside the boat at night); there was a canvas roll which contained the signal flags; the officer's kit, consisting of old flannel trousers and tooth powder; and there was the interpreter.

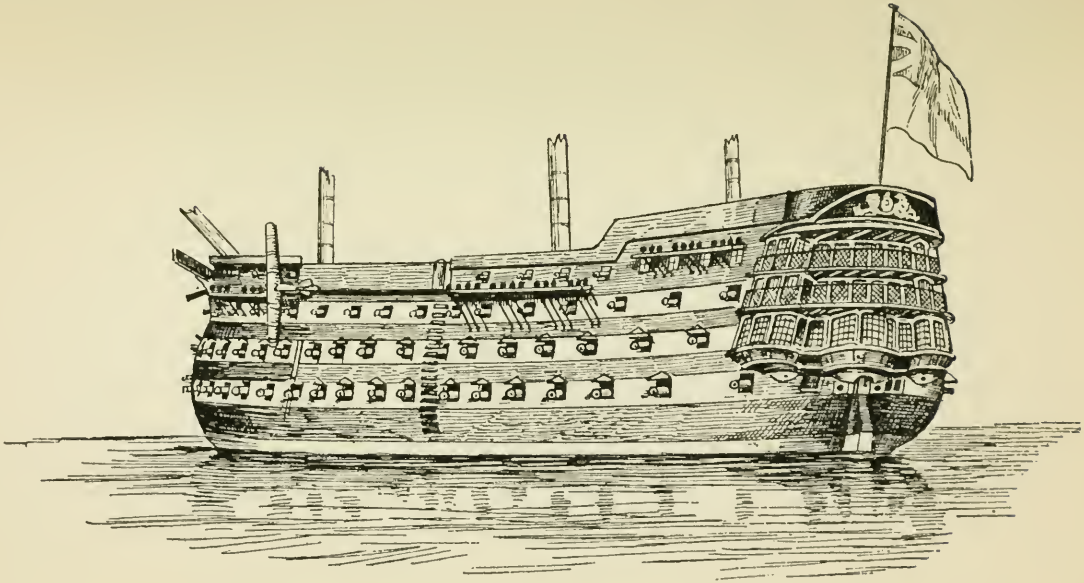
All this was stowed in a 28-foot pinnace, 7 feet wide, rigged as a cutter with one mast but no boom. Her crew consisted of an officer, coxswain, interpreter, 10 seamen and 1 marine; and in this certainly confined space did they live week after week.

The marine having made the cocoa—which with the sugar and tea formed yet another package to be stowed away—the hands were "piped to breakfast," which consisted of the cocoa and some hard biscuit. When this luxurious meal was finished the boat was cleaned with that thoroughness which always distinguishes such an operation in the Navy. Everything was moved that could be moved, and everything was scrubbed, within an inch of its life, that could be possibly got at. The gun, in the gloomy seclusion of its tarred canvas bag, alone escaping. Then each man got out his rifle and cutlass and cleaned them; and when they had been returned to their beckets beneath the thwarts, there was really nothing more to do, except for the marine, who

in due time put lumps of salt pork on to boil for dinner at twelve o'clock. By this time the sun would be high in the heavens and the heat great; and it was a study in ingenuity to see the manner in which the awning was so handled as to be spread while the boat was actually sailing on a wind. The officer and the man who went slave cruising in those days had to expunge the word "impossible" from his dictionary; and if he did not want to be slowly roasted alive he was bound to seek for some shelter from the sun. There was nothing to do but to doze or to smoke, and for one man to keep a bright look out. Whenever a sail was sighted then the boat was steered to cut her off; she was overhauled if possible, boarded, vouched for as not being employed in the slave trade, and let go. Of course if she had slaves on board, or indications that she was employed in the trade, she was detained and sailed back to the rendezvous if possible; if not, she was destroyed where she was.

As a rule a long stretch out to sea was made in the morning, the boat's head being turned in towards the land in the afternoon; as the sun went down, as snug an anchorage as was possible in the circumstances was sought for, and the boat fixed for the night. Then the awning was spread, and by half-past eight everyone was sound asleep save the one man on the look out.

Once a week or so the boat had to be watered from some spring or river. These were gala days, something out of the ordinary routine. First the barricos were filled with the utmost care, not to disturb the mud or sand at the bottom; then, as soon as this had been



The *Waterloo*, of 120 guns, launched in the reign of William IV.

done, all hands were in the water in a trice, each bearing an enormous lump of yellow soap. As soon as everyone had scrubbed himself—and it was a point of honour for each man to lather himself till he was quite unrecognisable—he then set to work on his clothes, until after a joyful two hours the boat would proudly put out to sea looking like a marine laundry with trousers and flannels dependent from every point on which they could be hung.

There were great days when the officer and the interpreter would manage to pick up a few dozen eggs or half a dozen skinny fowls from a Sakalava village; then the company feasted royally on these unaccustomed luxuries. The greatest day of all, however, was when a whole bullock was secured, and all hands ate fresh beef for breakfast, dinner, and tea, and spent the intervals between meals in salting down the rest. In the south-west monsoon, when it blew hard and rained with persistency, the lot of the boat cruiser was not a happy one. Even when it did not rain there was generally a big sea on, which prevented him from cooking his food, and he rarely got a hot meal. He was flayed alive and pickled by the flying spindrift; he was soaked to the marrow of his bones with the tropical rains; he had no dry clothing; he developed fever and boils, of which he had to make the best, and his diet consisted mainly of quinine.

At such time he was accustomed to make pointed remarks concerning the slave trade; giving it as his opinion that those who wished to suppress this traffic were quite welcome to come out to the Mozambique or the Pemba Channel and do it for themselves; but that

he would guarantee one week's experience would cure all their philanthropy. This, he asserted with much bitterness, would be washed out of them so completely by the sea and the rain, that all the niggers in East Africa might be shipped from the slave rivers, and all that these people would do would be to stand on the beach and cheer. But when you have been wet through for a week, have been unable to face salt pork for dinner, and have had four heavy goes of quinine per day, you are apt to take a jaundiced view of life and the problems that it presents!

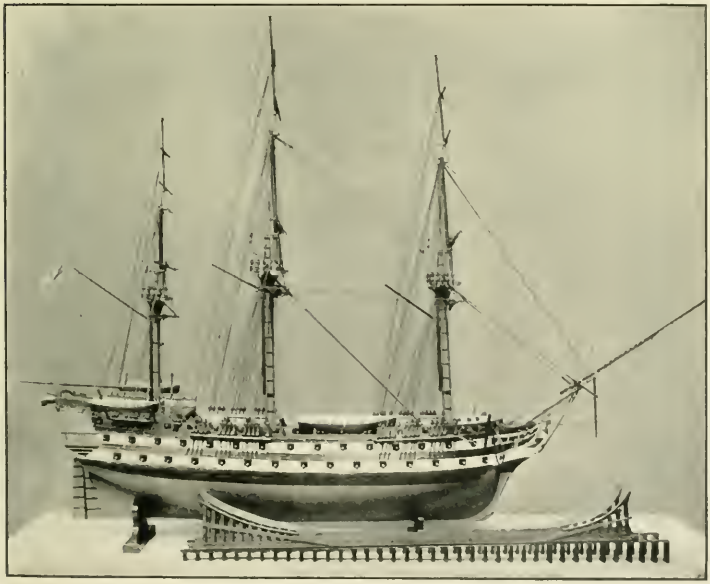
There was, however, even in the darkest hour something which always upheld the spirits; this was the ever-present hope that some day there would come the bold, bad slave trader who was prepared to fight for his dhow and his cargo of slaves. Great traditions lived on the coast of mighty men of valour who had put to sea, swearing by Allah and his Prophet that they would stop for no accursed *giaour* of them all; but would assert the right of the Moslem to deal in slaves at the point of the scimitar. And it was the dream of every officer and every man in every boat's crew that shoved off and set sail in those waters, that their's might be the luck, and that the lot might fall to them to show the world that the sailor who was serving now was every whit as good as those who had gone before. It was a very natural ambition, but it was very seldom gratified, as although the Arab is a stark fighting man, he prefers his adversaries to be of a less strenuous temperament than the average British bluejacket. What the really tough specimen of the slave trader would sometimes attempt cannot be better embodied than in the following account,

extracted from official records, of what happened to a boat belonging to H.M.S. *Turquoise* in the year 1887. On 20th June, Captain Woodward wrote to the Commander-in-Chief on the East Indian station as follows:

"Sir,—I have the honour to enclose herewith correspondence with reference to the capture of an Arab slave dhow and 53 slaves by Lieutenant Frederick Fogerty Fegen in the pinnace of H.M. ship under my command at Pemba on 30th May, and in so doing I beg specially to bring to your notice the most gallant and determined conduct of that officer and his boat's crew. It is especially my duty to mention that on the dhow attempting to run down the pinnace with the intention of carrying her by boarding, Lieutenant Fegen immediately rushed forward (the dhow having caught the pinnace's forestay with her bowsprit) to repel the Arabs, seven of whom were ready to board. He promptly shot two with his revolver, then drew his cutlass and ran another through the body. Whilst thus engaged he received a very severe wound, a sword-cut on the right arm, from an Arab who came to assist the one he was engaged with. This Arab was run through by John W. Pearson, A.B., before he had time to inflict further injury. Notwithstanding his severe wound this officer continued fighting with his cutlass until the dhow got clear (at this time there were three men in the bottom of the boat wounded), the remainder of the crew, three in number, fighting hard and supporting him. When the dhow got clear nine Arabs had already been killed. No sooner had this occurred than she endeavoured to escape. Lieutenant Fegen picking up the dingy gave chase, and

a running fight was maintained until the helmsman of the dhow was shot, when she broached to and capsized in shallow water. He immediately anchored his boat as near the sunken dhow as possible, and proceeded to rescue the slaves, the four unwounded men saving as many as they could by means of the dingy and also by jumping overboard; 53 all told were saved. I am informed by Mr. Holmwood, Consul-General, that of the 13 Arabs on board the dhow 9 were the most notorious slave dealers in Pemba, and in all there were upward of 20 armed men, the arms being Snider rifles and swords. Of the 13 Arabs, 11 have been killed, which will doubtless deal a heavy blow against the slave trade. Two Arabs succeeded in reaching the shore, one of whom subsequently died of his wounds, and the other escaped: measures have been taken for his capture. I cannot speak too highly of the brave and gallant behaviour of Lieutenant Fegen and his crew. In rushing forward and preventing the Arabs from boarding, he, in my opinion, saved annihilation. The advantage in numbers, 3 to 1 at least, and position was decidedly in favour of the dhow. He was backed up most bravely by his boat's crew, four received severe wounds, one having since died. I would respectfully suggest that you will be pleased to submit for the favourable consideration of their Lordships the conduct of Lieutenant Fegen and his boat's crew: this is not the first time that this officer has been the subject of special report from me. The gallant defence made by the boat's crew makes selections invidious, but Lieutenant Fegen informs me that Frederick J. Russell and Joseph E. Greep, leading seamen, fought with distinguished gallantry.

H.M.S. *AJAX*, 1795.



H.M.S. *VANGUARD*, 1835.

Surgeon Norman, of H.M.S. *Reindeer*, deserves great credit for skilful surgery under trying circumstances. The patient behaviour of the wounded whilst undergoing acute suffering prior to the arrival of medical assistance was most praiseworthy.

(Signed) R. WOODWARD."

Interesting as is the report of Captain Woodward, that of the man actually engaged is naturally more so, and it is well to note how cool and accurate is this narrative, given by a man on whom all the responsibility rested, and who was desperately wounded at the very beginning of the action; the surgeon's report runs: "This officer received a severe wound, the wound being about 12 inches long, and reached from just above the shoulder joint to just above the elbow joint on outer side of arm. This, owing to want of medical attention, gaped very much, and he must have lost a lot of blood. Several minor injuries —one of his fingers being almost separated. Fegen's report runs thus:

"SIR,—I have the honour to inform you of the engagement and capture of a slave dhow, name and nationality unknown, and about 65 slaves, 12 of whom were drowned, by the pinnace of H.M.S. *Turquoise* on 30th May 1887, under the following circumstances. On the evening of 29th May I arrived at Fundigap (island of Pemba) in the pinnace of *Turquoise* and anchored inside the gap for the night. My crew consisted of a coxswain, 6 seamen, 1 marine, and an interpreter. At daylight the following morning the look-out man reported to me a dhow entering the gap; we at once furled the awning, swayed up the mainsail, shortened the cable up and down, and provided arms. As the dhow was coming in

our direction, and seemed from her movements to be a peaceful trader making for the channel on the edge of which we were anchored, I sent the dingy" (a tiny punt just holding two men, to row a pair of oars, and the interpreter in the stern) "with my coxswain, 1 seaman, and the interpreter, about 100 yards ahead, ready to board her, so that while she was being boarded the dhow should be passing close under command of fire of the pinnace. The dhow approached the dingy running before the wind, nobody being visible to me before the sail which screened the after part of the vessel. As she passed the dingy I heard the interpreter hail several times for her to lower her sail, and on no notice being taken of the hail I gave the order "load." At that moment the dhow altered course and steered straight for the pinnace. I at once gave the order to trip the anchor and make sail, at the same time hailing the dhow to keep clear of us. At that moment the dhow exchanged several shots with the punt, and continued to bear down on us. Observing that we could not gather way in time to avoid the dhow, I went forward at once to the starboard bow, where I saw the dhow would strike us, calling on the men to repel boarders. Just before the collision a number of Arabs armed with rifles and swords sprang up from the fore part of the dhow where they had lain concealed, and also from under the roofing, and fired a volley into us; then drawing their swords as we collided they made a most determined attempt to carry us by the board, but not one succeeded in getting into the boat. After a most desperate hand-to-hand fight, during which the Arabs in the after part of the dhow kept up a constant fire upon us, we drove them back

killed and wounded. As two of our men were by this time shot down and I was severely wounded, the dingy's crew being away, I did not consider it advisable to carry her by boarding, so I steered clear and hauled to the wind to obtain the weather gauge and cover the dingy, a heavy fire being kept up. Having taken the dingy in tow I bore up in chase, the dhow being by this time in full flight; keeping a continual fire on the dhow from rifles, I mounted the 9-pounder, but before I could bring it into action, the steersman of the dhow having been either shot or driven from his post, the dhow came to the wind, was taken aback and foundered in about two fathoms of water close to the beach. Seeing a number of men swimming towards the shore trying to escape, I pushed on to try to cut them off. Most of them were drowned, a few reaching the shore. Most of the surviving slaves were standing in the dhow keeping their heads above water. Observing Arabs collecting on the beach, we drove them away with shrapnel and case, and then anchored close to the dhow to save the slaves, many of whom were drowning. We saved 53, and I saw 12 or 13 dead. The slaves state that there were 13 Arabs in the dhow besides the crew, who were armed, and that of these only three Arabs got ashore, the remainder being killed. I have since heard that one has died of his wounds, but of these latter numbers I cannot be certain."

There were four men besides Fegen who were desperately wounded, and of these one died after amputation of the leg. Russell, the coxswain, who among this band of "first-class fighting men" was specially commended by his officer, and who was one of the

wounded, adds to his own tale of the event: "The eleven days' waiting for medical attendance will never be forgotten by any of us." Commander Lang of the *Reindeer*, the first ship with which the pinnace came into communication after the action, and whose surgeon attended to the wounded, reports to Captain Woodward of the *Turquoise*: "In conclusion, I beg to report the plucky and cheerful way Lieutenant Fegen and the wounded men have behaved under the extreme pain they must have suffered from such severe wounds, especially being so long without medical assistance."

There is but little to add in way of comment to this story. Nine men fought with 26 or 27, who had the advantage of making a surprise attack in a large on a much smaller vessel. When the dhow ran aboard of the pinnace there were only six people to contend with them; and had these six failed in repulsing the assault, there would have been defeat and disaster to report by any who might have survived.

But the old spirit of the British sailor was alive in those mariners of the *Turquoise*. That anyone should have been found in those latitudes with pluck enough to attack, even when the attack was a surprise and they were outnumbered 3 to 1, must have delighted them; for here were no scientific long bowls to be played, but the joy and the glory of striving for the right, for the liberty of the slave, against him by whom that slave had been captured, fettered, and stowed in the noisome hold of his swiftly sailing dhow. Fegen and his men fought that day to liberate the slave, and liberate him they did, at what cost to themselves we have seen; but they fought also to uphold the honour of that flag under which

they served, in order that all men might know that even in those far-distant waters, the colours blended in that national emblem sheltered and protected those weak ones from whom liberty had been reft with a strong and ruthless hand.

CHAPTER XV

TREATS OF TORPEDO CRAFT AND TYPHOONS

We all know that powerful and magnificent as is the battleship, that it is not she and her consorts alone that constitute a navy. In the old days there were frigates, sloops, brigs, schooners, and cutters, which acted as auxiliaries to their bigger sisters of the sea. They were employed as scouts and look outs, and were generally what is known as "the eyes of the fleet." To-day the place of these vessels has been taken by cruisers, scouts, torpedo-boat destroyers, torpedo boats, and submarines, but the last named can hardly be defined as eyes of the fleet, as naturally when they are under water they can see nothing at all, and when they are on the surface very little, as they are then so slightly raised above the level of the sea.

All the types mentioned have, no less than the battleship, undergone perpetual change since they were first invented; and again it would take a large volume to record what has been done with regard to these craft. That which has modified all ideas of naval warfare more than any other invention has been the Whitehead automobile torpedo. Fired from a tube, which is under water in the case of the battleship, and on deck in the case of a destroyer; having its own engine; its own

adjustment for the depth at which it is to travel; fitted with what is known as a "gyroscope" to ensure its straight running; armed with a head filled with high explosive, which detonates and explodes with terrific violence when it strikes the object at which it is aimed, it is the modern terror of the sea. Its internal mechanism is a marvel of ingenuity. Driven as it is by compressed air, it was found that the process of admitting air from the air reservoir to the engines through a necessarily small and constricted pipe generated intense cold, which prevented the air exercising as much power as it could if it were introduced at a higher temperature. To obviate this the modern Whitehead is fitted with what is known as a heater—a paraffin lamp that is automatically lighted as the torpedo is discharged from the tube, at the same time as another automatic device starts the engines by admitting the air as the machine leaps forward into the water.

For many years the Whitehead was not very formidable, as before the invention of fitting it with the gyroscope and the heater its range was not very long, nor was its speed very great; it was indeed apt to be exceedingly erratic in its running. At first it was only 14 inches in diameter; then an 18-inch torpedo was constructed, and was and is still used; in its most modern shape, however, the diameter is 21 inches.

Of course the idea of the torpedo is a very old one, Lord Cochrane having invented one for his own use at the time of the Basque Roads; but the Whitehead is comparatively modern, not having been used in our own Navy until some forty years ago. There was before its introduction a curious contraption known as the Harvey

torpedo, which could only be used by a ship having square yards. It was a peculiarly shaped box, ingeniously contrived for towing at the end of a rope. This box was filled with a high explosive; on the top of the box were a couple of levers, underneath which was the contrivance which fired the torpedo. The arrangement was towed by a single rope that ran through a block secured at the mainyard arm; this the sailor calls a single whip. The inboard end of this whip was secured round a drum; a couple of turns of the rope went round this, and the end was attended by a seaman. If this man slacked off the rope the torpedo sank lower; if he held on, the torpedo rose nearer to the surface of the water. The underlying idea of the whole thing was, that you should manœuvre until you were actually alongside the enemy with whom you were contending, that then the mariner should hold on tight to the end of the whip, thus causing the torpedo to rise beneath the bottom of the foe. When this happened, the levers which had been borne down by contact would explode the torpedo. The idea that in the mix up that must have ensued—did you ever get to such close quarters as were necessary—there was an excellent chance of the torpedo coming up under your own bottom, does not seem to have occurred to the inventor!

The Harvey torpedo, however, did not last very long as a weapon of war, and the arrival of the Whitehead—the fish torpedo as it used to be called—superseded all other inventions for the destruction of ships by blowing them up from under the water.

At the time of the first introduction of this intruder into naval affairs it was welcomed by some foreign

officers with great joy. All you had to do, according to them, was to build torpedo boats, arm them with the automobile torpedo, and sink any battleship that happened to come along. The theory sounded satisfactory, but it did not work well in practice. These people forgot two things: the first was that in those early days the Whitehead was far from being a reliable weapon; and in the second place, that a torpedo boat, even if she were able to keep cruising in heavy weather, could certainly make no effective attack when a big sea was running.

Notwithstanding such objections, however, torpedo boats continued to be built. In France particularly, their numbers ran into hundreds in the early eighties of the last century. As time went on it was felt that some answer must be made to the torpedo boat; and the first form that it took was in the building in our own country of what were known as "Torpedo Gunboats." These craft were about 700 tons, as compared with the 70 to 100 tons of the torpedo boat of that day. The function that they were supposed to perform was the hunting down and destruction of torpedo boats; which their greater size, power, and speed would enable them to do with ease, especially were the weather at all rough.

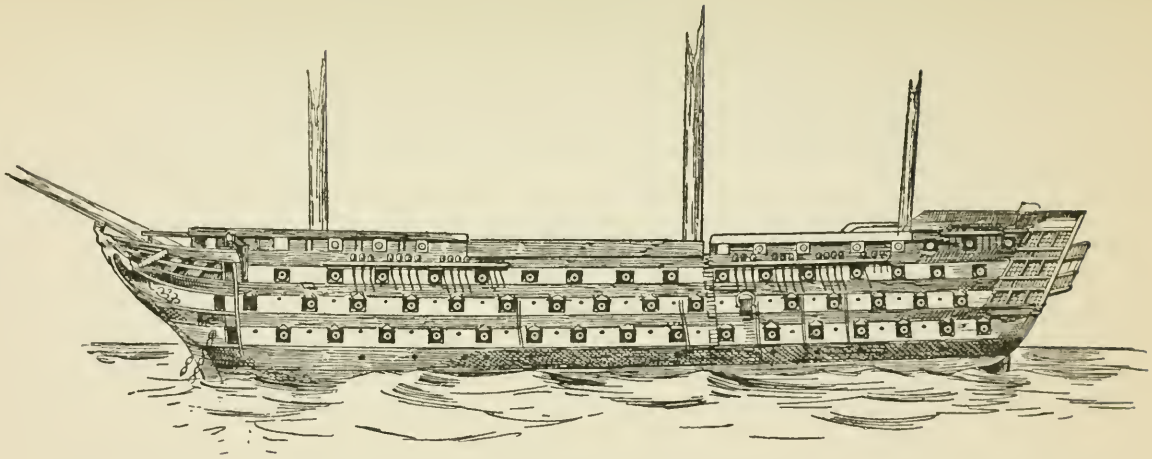
Not many vessels of this class were built, however, as in the year 1893 they were superseded by the craft known as torpedo-boat destroyers designed for the duty that is indicated by their name. Ever since the date mentioned, these destroyers have formed an important part of a navy.

The first destroyer, the *Havock*—a surprisingly apt

name for the forerunner of her type—was built by Yarrow, then of Poplar. She was 240 tons, 3500 horse-power, and had a mean trial speed of 26·77 knots, which was an enormous increase on anything that had gone before. Since the days of the *Havock* an immense number of destroyers have been built, and the type has naturally improved with experience gained. The latest of these vessels, the *Acasta* is 920 tons, 24,500 horse-power, and speed 32 knots. The *Swift* of 1908 is 1800 tons, 30,000 horse-power, and 36 knots speed, but her type has not been continued.

A torpedo boat built by Thorneycroft in 1885 was 63 tons, 730 horse-power, and had a speed of 20 knots. It will be seen from this what an advance has been made. This boat was useless except in moderate weather, whereas the modern destroyer is a ship—no longer a boat—able to keep the sea and to accompany the battle squadrons wherever they may be sent.

The menace of the torpedo has, with the passage of the years, grown greater and ever greater; and it may be asserted that no one man has ever cost the world so much by an invention as did the late Mr. Whitehead of Fiume. This is not only because of the millions expended in fitting his torpedoes into battleships and cruisers; nor yet alone because his invention has caused some four or five different types of vessels to be specially designed to be armed with the Whitehead; but in addition, because no fleet of warships can lie in any unenclosed ocean space for fear of the terror that may assail them beneath the waterline. Even so far back as 8th February 1904, the Russian battleships at anchor in Port Arthur were assailed by the Japanese torpedo craft and many of



The *Queen*, of 110 guns, the first three-decked ship launched in the reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

them badly damaged. Since that date the improvement in size, in accuracy, in destructive power, and in speed, both in the torpedo and the craft in which it is carried, has been extraordinary.

In the case of our own country, we can give an illustration of what we mean. At home we are fortunately blessed with many excellent deep-water harbours in which our ships can lie snugly, and which are easily protected from torpedo attack. When we come to the first outpost of the British Empire we find that this is no longer the case. Ever since Admiral Sir George Rooke—after his repulse at Minorca—thought that he had better do something to retrieve his reputation, and in consequence captured Gibraltar in the year 1704, the ships which fly the flag of England have sought and found refuge beneath the guns of that mighty fortress known to the ancients as Mons Calpe. But twenty years ago the naval authorities began to have serious doubts as to whether the Bay of Gibraltar were any longer a safe anchorage. The French—with which great nation we were not then on such good terms as we are at present—had swarms of torpedo craft at Toulon; and from that military port to the Rock is a bare 700 miles. Given a fine night,—and fine nights are the rule in those latitudes,—given the moderate speed of 20 knots, and a whole host of these mosquitoes of the sea might have arrived in Gibraltar Bay and have done untold harm before their attack was repulsed. The question was a most grave and serious one, as to render Gibraltar safe from such a raid as this millions of money would have to be spent. At last, however, the matter was decided and the work taken in hand; and once

begun, was done with thoroughness. Three moles made of solid stone now protect an area of water sufficient for a large battle fleet to lie inside in safety; and in addition to this a modern dockyard with workshops, dry docks, and everything necessary for the repair of damaged ships, or the upkeep of the undamaged in time of peace, have been installed. The cost of all this was immense, and to say that it meant an expenditure of nine millions of pounds is probably to understate the actual figure.

Whatever that expense may have been, it was money well spent, as quite secure from attack in time of war the British fleet can now, as it has done aforetime, lie snugly beneath the shadow of the Rock, ready, if necessary to seal the Straits and to give battle to all and sundry who wish to enter or to leave the Mediterranean.

Now that the maximum range of the 21-inch Whitehead torpedo is 11,000 yards, or roughly $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles; now that it can travel for the first $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles of its run at 45 knots per hour, and for the whole distance at an average of 30 knots per hour; it is more than ever evident how necessary it was to afford this protection in the Bay of Gibraltar for our fleet. Had this harbour not been constructed, and a battle fleet been lying at anchor in the Bay, a passing ship five miles away might have sent in a torpedo with an excellent chance of making a hit.

There is never any lack of volunteers in the Navy for the torpedo service; the life is hard, frequently most desperately uncomfortable,—in bad weather a veritable dog's life,—but it has a fascination all its own for those

young officers and seamen who man the flotillas that ring our coasts.

It speaks well for those by whom these vessels are built, when we recollect the weather that they are called upon to face. All the year round they are cruising, and in the North Sea when it comes on to blow there are very few harbours into which to run for shelter, with the result that many a gale has to be ridden out at sea. One experience that was recounted to the writer by an officer in command of a torpedo boat shows what sometimes has to be endured. The flotilla came out of Harwich, bound for the north—to the Firth of Forth or Cromarty. When they got to sea it came on to blow so furious a gale from the north-west that the senior officer decided to take his flotilla into Grimsby—always supposing that he could get there, which as time went on did not seem particularly likely. The flotilla of which we speak was not composed of large destroyers, but of the modern type of torpedo boats: oil fired, turbine driven, most efficient and excellent craft, of a tonnage of 250 tons. All that they had been asked to do hitherto they had done; they were fast, handy, and good sea boats, but then until this particular December afternoon they had never been asked to face quite such wicked weather as then obtained. As they struggled northwards the weather became worse and worse, and the cold was something quite unusual even for the North Sea in December. "We got on pretty well," said the officer by whom this tale was told, "as long as we were more or less under the shelter of the Norfolk coast; it was only when we opened the Wash that the fun really began. Already the sea water had begun to freeze as it flew

over the boats in sheets of spray ; but with the full force of the gale across the Wash, things began to look really serious. You know how steep and wall-sided the seas can be hereabouts ; they were steeper and more wall-sided than I had thought it possible for any waves to be. Of course we had long 'given best' to the gale and had eased our engines and were merely crawling along against it, shipping tons of water as we did so. Now we had to increase speed to make head at all in the weather that we were knocking up against.

"Honestly, I never thought that one of us would live it out ; talk about submarines—they were fools to this job. The sea was on the bow slantingwise to the course we had to steer, and when we got to the summit of one sea we fell off it sideways, as often as not, into the trough below. Each time she did this I thought to myself that it was good-bye, that she would never pick herself up again, that either she would go to the bottom straight away, or else the next oncoming comber might roll her clean over. Frightened? well no, hardly that ; you see you had no time to think of being in a funk ; of course if you had, it would have been the bluest one you ever struck. As it was, one was so busy attending to the engines and the helm ; boosting her up when one got a chance ; watching out that she didn't broach to ; seeing that not a second was lost in altering the helm and so on, that one had no time to think of anything else. Besides, there comes a time when it all don't seem to matter. Y'see, I'd been twenty-four hours on the bridge, and I was aching in every bone, bruised and drowned, and frozen to the marrow ; too tired to remember that I had had no food, too tired even to think

that I wanted any; but at last we won through and straightened her up to run up the Humber, where we got a bit of shelter and the sea took off. She was coated with ice from stem to stern, and when at last we managed to get our anchor down I heard a voice behind me saying, 'I think that you'll be the better with this,' and turning round I saw my engineer officer with something hot in a tumbler that went straight down and made a new man of me. That's what the North Sea's like in winter, and don't you forget it!" But the man to whom this yarn was spun replied: "Don't make the mistake of thinking that your yarn is not believed, for I have been there myself!" Bad weather at sea is invariably detesttable, but it depends very much on the type of craft in which it is encountered as to the amount of suffering and danger that is experienced.

There was once a destroyer which came out of the Yang-tse-Kiang River in the north of China, and almost as soon as she got well out to sea fell in with a typhoon. We must here digress a little to explain that a typhoon is one of those upheavals of nature—if an exceptionally bad storm can be so described—which does things that you can hardly believe unless you have seen them for yourself. If you tell them to other people —other people, that is to say, who have never had the privilege of meeting with a typhoon—they lift their eyebrows and walk away scornfully, smiling the while. This, perhaps, is not to be wondered at, and the reader shall be given his chance of not believing what is set down, preferring to think that the man who has done so is first cousin to that celebrated nobleman, Baron Munchausen.

The Man-of-War

A typhoon came into Hong-Kong harbour, in which at the time was anchored an old two-decked line-of-battleship then used as a receiving ship by the Navy. Her masts had been taken out, and over her upper deck had been built a roof at a rather high-pitched angle, supported by massive beams. The whole construction was as solid and heavy as dockyard carpenters could make it ; there was a gap, however, between the eaves of this roof and the topsides of the old ship to allow of free circulation of air. The typhoon arrived, as has been said, took one look at the ship and the roof, then lifted up its voice in that scream which no man may hear and ever forget. When that particular squall was over the roof was gone, and, what is more, no one ever saw it again.

At Canton a small steamer was at anchor in the river, but when the typhoon died down she was half a mile from the river, bottom up, in a paddy field ! How did she get there ? Nobody ever knew till they saw the upturned hull.

In Nagasaki, Japan, in this same breeze of wind, an ironclad which had been bought from the United States of America by the Japanese Government, sank at her moorings in what appears to be the safest and most landlocked harbour in which a ship could drop an anchor. The stone-faced quays, carefully finished with beautiful workmanship, were torn up as if there had been a dynamite explosion, and huge granite blocks weighing tons were thrown up into the middle of the road. Two English men-of-war, at anchor in Nagasaki at the time, saved themselves by steaming full speed to their anchors ; while all around them the native craft

foundered or were dashed to splinters against the granite wall.

The typhoon, as it is called in China, the cyclone of the Indian Ocean, or the hurricane in the West Indies, are all the same under different names; that is to say, circular storms of extreme violence. The wind is blowing round a certain area, which is encompassed by violent gales; at the same time the whole system is travelling in a definite direction. The law by which these storms is governed is perfectly well known to the mariner, who, if he be sufficiently unfortunate to fall in with one, turns his ship's head in a certain direction. The course that he invariably steers in such a case is one which leads him away from the centre of the storm, out through the encircling gales, until he has reached the limits of the disturbance. The reason that he does this is because, bad as are the gales in these storms which ring the centre, the place that is far the most dangerous is the centre itself. Here the wind and the sea run riot as if they were mad. The wind blows first from one quarter, then from another, with no sequence or regularity; no man can tell from what point of the compass the next devastating squall may fall upon the ship. All this time the sea that is knocked up by this erratic performance on the part of the wind, is frightful to contemplate and deadly to encounter. In the open ocean a gale will drive in front of it a monstrous sea, capped with foam, huge and irresistible, and hard to be negotiated by the mariner who sails in any but the most powerful of vessels. But in such a case he, at any rate, to speak familiarly, "knows where he is," and can if necessary heave to and wait till the worst is over. Not so if he be

caught in the centre of a typhoon; he must get out of this quickly, or he runs the chance of being overwhelmed by the waters.

Here is no ordered succession of mountainous waves; but a welter of waters, a jumble of jagged upstanding masses, flung hither and thither by the caprices of the wind.

These facts—and however incredulous the reader may be, they are facts—have been here set down to emphasise the sort of time a small craft like a destroyer was likely to have if she fell in with one of these storms. The destroyer which came out of the Yang-tse-Kiang river was sufficiently unfortunate to do so, and—what was still more unfortunate—had the very worst of the blow while it lasted.

The destroyer when overtaken by the typhoon was in sufficiently bad case; as vessels such as she, with so little freeboard, are always at a disadvantage in bad weather. Still, torpedo craft are fast, and had she been able to do what it was her business to do in the circumstances in which she was placed, she might have taken the most favourable avenue of escape and—in no very considerable number of hours—have won clear. Unfortunately for her the direction in which it was necessary for her to travel to get out of the centre of the storm was towards the land from which she had come. Had it been a bold and rocky coast with defined headlands, she might have had a try to get back into the mighty river from which she had so recently emerged, and where some shelter might have been obtained. But it so happens that here the shore is low and swampy, and the entrance to the river is far from well defined in conse-

quence. Had she run for it she might have put herself ashore with the certainty of every soul on board perishing if she did. She was in the very centre and vortex of the storm, and had to make it out as best she could, until it passed over and sought other latitudes. One thing alone would have prevented their approaching the shore in any case; and this was that although day came, with it came practically no daylight, and it was as if the sun had disappeared from the firmament. On the eastern horizon at dawn a red coppery rim showed itself for a few minutes, where the distant waves flung their foam-crested summits upwards; then this faded and darkness shut down again on the struggling ship and on the cauldron of waters with which she was surrounded.

What availed it to her now that in a calm or in moderate winds she could steam 28 knots? To steam landward was to risk running ashore, to steam seaward was to keep pace with the centre that it was their one object to avoid. All that they could do was to keep the engines moving, and to endeavour to dodge the worst of the water by which they were surrounded.

Those on deck lashed themselves where they were with ropes' ends, as movement was impossible. Sometimes, however, the impossible has to be taken in hand, defied, and dealt with, and it was so on this occasion. One of the anchors worked loose, and it became necessary to resecure it; if this were not done it would have knocked a hole in the side and she would have foundered. One officer and three men unlashed themselves and went on the forecastle. It was an old maxim of the sailing

days, "One hand for the Queen and one for yourself," when you were working aloft: here both hands had to be at the disposal of the errant anchor. Once as they toiled there arose alongside a pointed mass of water that curling over fell in ton weights full upon that labouring little group of men who were working with the energy of despair. It spread-eagled them on the curved steel deck; it pressed their bodies down until they thought that the end had come, for them at any rate, in sheer suffocation. It also passed through their minds that the ship had gone and that she had been driven beneath the surface never to rise again. But at last she flung herself clear, and as soon as this occurred they went on with their task, which in some miraculous way they accomplished with success.

Then the blue-grey darkness lifted for a little, and close by there passed a great ocean liner. Perhaps it was the sight of this ship and "the weather she was making of it," to use a seaman's phrase, that revealed to the men lying lashed on the deck of the destroyer how great was the peril in which they stood. At one moment half the length of this huge ship stood out clear of the water, and they could see her keel as far aft as her mainmast; then with a combined roll and pitch she would bury herself to her funnels. Her rail was a twisted mass of brass and iron; her ventilators had been torn from their fastenings; her boats all washed away. She passed, and the hearts of the watchers stood still as they said to themselves, "She can never live through such a sea as this." Afterwards it transpired that those on board the liner had been even more appalled

by the sight of the small craft; and that a clergyman on board of her had collected all whom he could "to pray for our brethren that they do not perish in the waters."

The marvel of it all was that the destroyer lived to tell the tale; battered and broken on deck, but still with hull and engines intact, she won her way back into the Yang-tse-Kiang, where for the first time in twenty-four hours those on board managed to get some food. She then proceeded up the river to Shanghai, piloted by her captain picturesquely arrayed in football knickers and a sweater—the only garments that he possessed which were not wet through! Although they reached "the haven where they would be," and although all hands were loud in their praise of the behaviour of their craft, there was yet a very decided opinion both forward and aft that after their recent experience "they had no further use for typhoons in a destroyer."

There is yet another class of torpedo craft with which the world will be greatly concerned in any forthcoming war; this is the submarine. The first of these vessels to be built for our own country was from the designs of Mr. J. P. Holland of Paterson, New Jersey. She was 63 feet in length, 11 feet 6 inches in breadth, and had a total displacement of 120 tons. Like all other vessels, the submarine has gone on increasing in size and in power from the date mentioned down to the present day, and still further expansion is likely to take place in the future. At present there are submarines in commission of 810 tons which have a speed of 16 knots on the surface and 9 knots when submerged; while craft of

this type of 1200 tons, with a designed surface speed of 20 knots, are being built.

Originally designed only to carry torpedoes, the later classes of submarines are fitted also with 12-pounder guns and wireless telegraphy. It seems as if there would be a further advance in every way in the near future; in fact, even now there are people who talk of a submarine battleship, and it is thought by some that owing to the menace which the submarine presents to the huge battleships of the present day, the reign of the surface vessel is over, and that future combats will be fought out between the submarine and the seaplane. The submarine is of course a special service in itself, and for it the officers and men who volunteer are most carefully chosen.

The seaplane is the latest of all arms, and is being rapidly developed, but at the cost of many valuable lives.

What further marvels science has in store for us no one can say. Not long ago there was a report that an ingenious scientist had invented an apparatus giving off etheric waves into the atmosphere that would detonate any explosive with which they came into contact. If a battleship or cruiser suddenly exploded with no apparent cause, or if a regiment of soldiers carrying loaded cartridges in their bandoliers were with equal suddenness to blow up, you would know that the disasters were due to these mysterious waves. So far, however, nothing definite has come to pass; and this is to be regretted, perhaps, for it is evident that it would be no use to use firearms of any sort if such things could be accomplished. If one wanted to fight, one

would have to resort to such ancient weapons as the battle-axe, the mace, and the sword, which would at any rate have the advantage of being much more economical than the methods at present in use for the slaying of one's enemies!

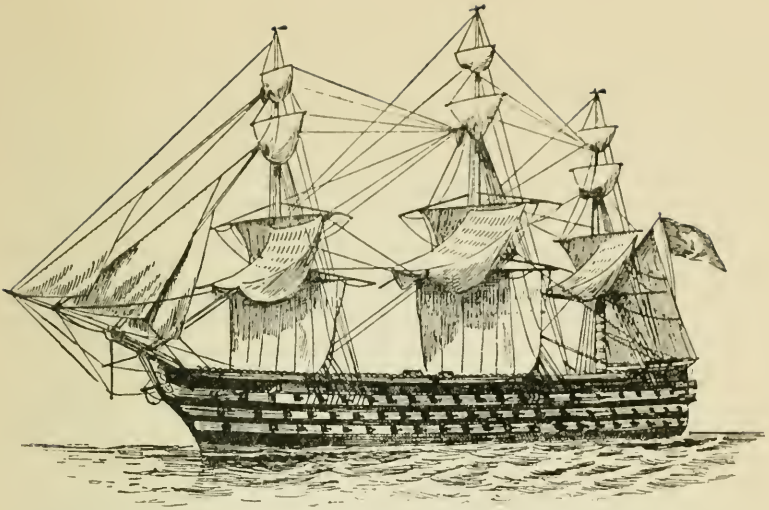
CHAPTER XVI

ODD JOBS—THE END

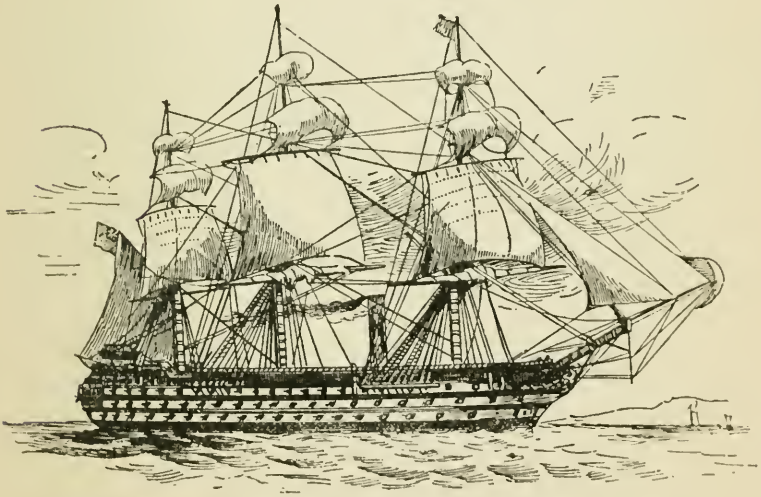
It would probably surprise the public at large and the nation which nowadays pays so heavily for the upkeep of the Navy, if a return could be published showing exactly what may be called "the odd jobs" that that service is called upon to perform in the course of any one single year. Such a return is never likely to be published, as although it would be extraordinarily interesting, still it is not the business of any Government department to provide light reading for His Majesty's lieges.

To take an instance, there are probably few who know that there are now, and have been for years past, British sailors serving the Crown in the very middle of the continent of Asia, who, having left the ocean at the entrance of the Yang-tse-Kiang River in Northern China, have ascended that mighty stream so far that their ultimate goal is within sight of the mountains of Tibet, and that the ship in which they are serving is actually nearer to the Indian Ocean than the Pacific which they left.

It is many years since Hankow, one of the great tea-shipping ports, was opened to European commerce. Hankow is 600 miles from the sea, and a voyage thither



The French screw line of battleship *La Bretagne*, 130 guns, 1200 horse-power, launched at Brest in 1855. *Note.—Bretagne* of 1912 programme, now completing at Brest, is 23,550 tons, carries ten 13·4-inch guns throwing a 1400 lb. projectile. Horse-power, 20,250. Speed, 20·5 knots.



H.M.S. *Duke of Wellington*, screw line of battleship, 131 guns, 3771 tons, launched at Pembroke in 1852.

years ago is impressed on the mind of the writer because of the strangeness of the experience of dashing past a bank—so near that you could have thrown a biscuit on to it—at the rate of 14½ knots under steam and sail. It was blowing half a gale of wind, but nevertheless the ship was under double-reefed topsails and courses with topgallant sails over all and was also steaming full speed. The Chinamen who lined the bank immediately under her lee, remarked, "Hi Ya" in the most fervent manner. As they had never seen anything like it before—though they were quite accustomed to steamers—the remark was quite natural and pardonable.

Some years after this a farther concession was made by the Chinese, and ships were allowed to proceed to Ichang-fu, some 400 miles farther up the river. A gunboat proceeded thither and remained some six months; in it was a friend of the writer's. When he asked with considerable curiosity what sort of a time they had had, whether the shooting was good, and all the usual questions that one naval officer asks of another, the answer was that things had been decidedly gloomy. "You see," he replied, it ain't like Hankow, or Amoy, or Foochow-foo, or any of the other treaty ports. There, of course, they don't like us, but they know jolly well that they'll have their tails twisted to rights if they make things unpleasant for the British marinero. But at Ichang the wild native is quite untutored, and we were invariably addressed in terms of insult, in which 'fanqui'—which means foreign devil—was quite the mildest. However, that didn't matter so much, for one doesn't understand what they're saying; although 'it ain't so much the things they says as the nasty way they

says it'; you understand! They made it quite plain to the most limited understanding that they wished to insult us. But it was not only that, but they argued on the principle of the navvy in *Punch*, when his boy told him he saw a stranger coming, and who promptly desired his offspring 'to 'eave 'arf a brick at him.' That's what the genial inhabitants of Ichang did to us; likewise mud, rotten cabbages, or anything else that came handy, till we felt like an unpopular candidate at an election. I don't know," continued the narrator with a deep air of grievance, "whether in some subtle way the Chinaman can communicate with animals; but I do know that the cattle made for us, the dogs bit us, the very water buffaloes would arise from their lair of mud and water in order to have a go at us; so anyone can have my share of the upper reaches of the Yang-tse, and is more than welcome to it." That, however, was a long time ago, and perhaps the Chinamen, their dogs and their water buffaloes, at this particular spot have now learned better manners!

The man-of-war now passes Ichang, 1000 miles from the sea, and proceeds another thousand or so to Chung King-fu. This voyage, however, is not accomplished without difficulty, as tremendous rapids intervene. Naturally these rapids have always been there, and they have been surmounted since the beginning of all things by the Chinese in their junks. The manner of doing this has always been to tie ropes to the bows of the ascending vessel, and for hundreds of men to walk on either bank towing her in this fashion. When the gunboats first went up, they also had to negotiate the rapids in the same manner. Then one day a gunboat arrived,

quite a modern vessel, and it was noised abroad throughout the country side that this new invention of the fanqui was to attempt the passage of the rapids under her own steam. That any vessel could do this was quite impossible—at least so argued the old timers, the fine crusted conservatives among the Chinese. Still, as the attempt was to be made, and as it would be a most pleasing spectacle to watch the helpless wreck of this too audacious gunboat rolled over and over in the rapids, and to see her entire crew drowned within a yard or two of the bank, the local population made a bank holiday of the day, and the sides of the stream were packed with thousands upon thousands come to witness the discomfiture of the crack-brained English.

The rapids run at something like 9 knots an hour and the passage is none too clear of dangers; yet the gunboat steamed up the raging torrent and emerged in safety at the higher end, doubtless to the bitter disappointment of those benevolent beings who had wasted half a day to see this presumptuous folly properly chastised by the wreck of the ascending vessel. Those who have come down these same rapids under their own steam have described it as quite one of the most exciting experiences of their lives, which is a matter that is easy of belief.

Leaving these Central Asian mariners, let us proceed to another quarter, which from time immemorial has provided the queerest of odd jobs for those condemned to serve in its waters. The word "condemned" is used advisedly, for no one outside the walls of a lunatic asylum would wish to serve in the Persian Gulf. Surrounded by barren rock and staring desert, it is in the summer

time one of the hottest places in the world, and its shores are inhabited by races of people whose manners and behaviour leave much to be desired. That one side of the Gulf is known as "the Pirate Coast," sufficiently indicates the occupation of a proportion of those who live in this strip of country. The English have been trading here for many many years, and at Bushire, in Persia, near the head of the Gulf, is stationed a British official known as the Resident. He is really a "guide, philosopher, and friend" to all these queer people, and maintains the peace among them by his own personal influence; he is looked up to and consulted by many who elsewhere than in "the Gulf" would be looked upon as bloodstained and abominable criminals.

That the standard of morals and manners is not high in this neighbourhood, was brought home in a somewhat startling fashion to a shipmate of the writer's on one occasion. The Resident, by way of keeping up friendly communication with the chiefs, was in the habit of requisitioning a man-of-war once a year to go round to the different ports. In this vessel either he, or some deputy of his, would embark, and, accompanied by the captain of the ship, have interviews with the tribal chieftains. If during the past twelve months they had been "good boys,"—that is to say, if they had no particularly black record of robbery or murder against them,—then they were presented with rifles, carriage clocks, red cloth, and other articles which do not grow in profusion in those deserts with which the Gulf is ringed, as a mark of the esteem in which they were held by the British Government.

It was on one of these trips that a corvette was

employed, and having embarked the official representing the Resident, she proceeded with him to the island of Bahrein, which is the centre of the principal pearl-fishing industry, and from whence pearls are said to have been procured in the days of Solomon. What the tribesmen of Bahrein were like in those days we do not know, but they probably were not much better, and it would have troubled them to be much worse! The principal inhabitants flocked on board as soon as the ship came to an anchor; but there were so many of them that all could not be accommodated in the captain's cabin, some perforce being left outside on the quarter-deck. With these the officers held such conversation as was possible through an interpreter. The paymaster, a mild and elderly person, was engaged in passing the time of day with a truculent, ferocious-looking chieftain, bristling with weapons, and with a scowl that would have made the fortune of a melodramatic actor. The melodramas of the Persian Gulf, however, are reality; there is no occasion to maintain an expensive theatre where they may be acted. The paymaster, after much laboured amiability to this half-breed Arab and negro, found his stock of conversation running somewhat low; accordingly he told the interpreter to ask his friend what he had been doing the day before. This was translated, and the scowl deepened on the face of the chief as he threw eloquent hands abroad and answered the question in deep clicking gutturals; he ended with a ferocious laugh. "What does he say?" demanded the paymaster. "He say," replied the interpreter in his slow, bored-sounding drawl, "that yesterday he have a good day, quite enjoy himself." "Oh yes, yes," broke

in the paymaster, beaming approval; "and what did he do?" "He say," drawled the interpreter, more bored than ever, "he kill his greatest enemy"—the paymaster gave a gasp of horror—"and," continued the tired voice, "he eat him liver." "Good Lord!" shouted the paymaster, "he doesn't really mean that, does he?" "I no savvy," replied the interpreter; "he say so, I think he speak true, he look like it, we are all in the hands of Allah." The conversation was pursued no further, as at this moment the rest of the deputation came out of the captain's cabin, and that officer, accompanied by the Resident's deputy, followed them on shore to hold a further pow-wow at the house of the Sheikh.

This ruler, it was discovered, had a grievance: it was not a very bad one, according to Persian Gulf standards, still a matter into which it was necessary to enter. It appeared, according to the statement of the Sheikh, that a couple of days before a neighbouring potentate had raided his territory and had carried off a flock of sheep. It was quite evident to the ruler of Bahrein that neither the naval nor the political officer believed one word that he was saying. He was a natural, monumental, and ornamental liar, but it grieved him all the same, this want of confidence between man and man; added to which, as it happened, he was speaking the truth.

"Evidence shall be produced," he said with a dignified air, and then gave some orders in a low tone to a man beside the divan on which he sat. The man went out, and in some half-hour or so—during which time the political officer and the Sheikh talked about nothing with intense gravity—the door at the end of the long, low, whitewashed hall was flung open and four men

entered carrying a sack. With this they advanced to the divan, and when they arrived there one of the men unsheathed his dagger and cut the string with which the sack was sewn up; then the end was lifted, and on to the floor in front of the captain and the political tumbled "a grisly, unhandsome corpse" which was nearly cut to to ribbons. "That," declared the Sheikh, pointing with a finely formed, delicately shaped hand at the object on the floor, "was my shepherd; your honours will doubtless observe that he came by a violent death!"

"You have established your case beyond a doubt," replied the political officer, holding his nose; "we will dispense with the further attendance of the witness." The noisome corpse was returned to its sack and removed.

Many and strange are the tales of the Gulf; we have no room for more of them here, nor indeed for others of the odd jobs that the State and its representatives abroad find for the Navy to do. Fishery protection; landing to assist in the extinguishing of fires on shore; assistance to any mariner in danger from whatsoever cause; the guarding of our coasts by bluejackets—all these and numerous other things come within the scope and duty of the service which does so much and talks so little.

. . . . . .

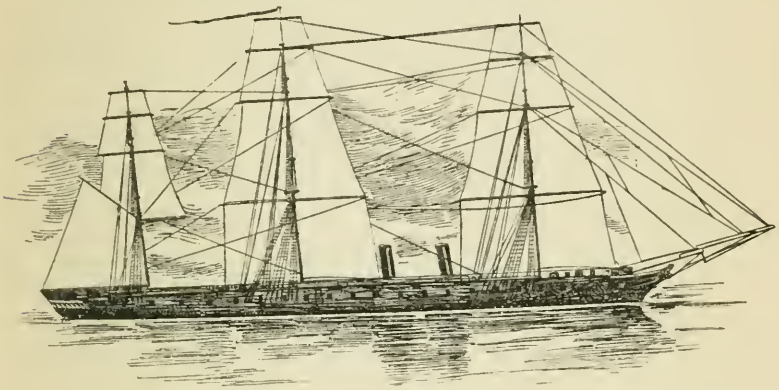
The life that is led by the seaman of the present day is in one way the same, in another it differs from those of his predecessors about whom we have spoken in this book. It is the same on account of the element on which his life is passed, for the sea never changes. Yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the mystery, the strength,

the cruelty, and the beauty of the sea remain: it is the ships that have changed, and with them the men who have them in their charge. Time was, and that not so long ago, when the principal interest on board a man-of-war was concentrated more on technical seamanship, on the handling of the vessel under sail, on all the infinite variety of drill and exercise rendered possible by the masts and yards and sails of the ship, than on the problem of gunnery.

The life of the sailor has been changed entirely in the course of very few years by three principal happenings. These are, first of all the improvement in the marine engine, which may now be looked to to perform all that falls to its lot, and which is no longer an uncertain quantity liable to break down and to leave the ship dependent on her sails to reach port. This was a commonplace experience some years ago which no longer hampers the modern mariner in his voyages. Secondly, the change on board a man-of-war is due to the improvement in ordnance. In the days of the smooth-bore gun it was necessary to lay your ship close to the enemy before it became possible to do any material damage to his hull, his rigging, or his crew; but with the introduction of the rifled gun came an instantaneous change. Even so it has taken a comparatively long time for the gun to reach the stage that it is at to-day, when ranges of from 15,000 yards—or $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles—downwards are the commonplaces of target practice. Gunnery, from being very much "go-as-you-please," has become an exact science—which a good many unfortunate people will discover in the next war—and this is due to the improvement in the gun itself, to a scientific knowledge of

the effect of the explosive in the chamber and bore of the gun, and to a series of exhaustive experiments carried out in every new ship, known under the title of "calibration."

The object of calibration is to cause all guns of the same calibre—that is to say, 6-inch, 12-inch, or whatever they may be—to shoot exactly the same. If you have, say, a battery of 6-inch guns, ten in number, at every



Sheer plan drawn to scale of H.M.S. *Warrior*, first British ironclad, 1861. 6109 tons, 32 guns (68-pounders).

range (from the farthest to that nearest to the ship) a projectile from each and all those guns must strike in exactly the same place, in order that if a broadside be fired all the projectiles will arrive at the object aimed at at one and the same time.

Naturally, with increased distance have come improved telescopic sights for the guns, and improved instruments, known as range-finders, by which the distance of the target, or the ship of the enemy, can be accurately determined. With all these improvements has come a

power of hitting such as was never known before; but we must not on that account blame the sailors of an older generation for not equalling the feats of their successors with these perfected weapons: they in their day did as well as the guns they used permitted them to do.

Lastly, we have the torpedo, which is now of 21-inch calibre and has a range of 11,000 yards. No one can yet determine exactly what part this modern wonder weapon is going to play in the next war, for so far no one has had the opportunity of using it in battle.

All these changes have affected the daily life of officer and man on board all our ships: the old drills and exercises that were known to their predecessors have gone by the board, and their place has been taken by new ones; these new ones not differing so much as they did in the days that are past never to return. Nowadays all the energies of both officers and men are devoted to the one thing, which is to hit, and to go on hitting, a target, either with a gun or a torpedo.

In conclusion, it may be said that although great changes have come, and with the advance of science still greater changes may be in store, life on board of a man-of-war follows the main lines that it has always followed; that is to say, it remains a life of discipline and hard work. No general rule can be laid down how exactly that life is lived, as officer or man may be a unit on board of a battle cruiser carrying 1000 men, or he may be serving in a torpedo boat in the patrol flotillas, in which case he will be one of twenty-five or so. But wheresoever he may find himself, whether the

pennant under which he serves flies from the tall wireless mast of a battleship or the stumpy erection that does the same duty in a torpedo boat, the tone which has made the service what it is remains the same.

It is no trade for the weakling, no matter to what branch of the service he may belong; but it is, after all, a man's life, one which will call out the best qualities of those who serve. There never was man or boy yet who was not the better for discipline; there never was any great commander who did not bear its yoke in his youth. But the bonds of discipline, such as you will find in the Navy of His Majesty King George V.—himself, be it noted, a sailor who has gone through the mill—is a yoke which does not gall any save those who are stupid and inefficient, and for such people the Navy has no use. There is one peculiarity of the sailor which all who have had much to do with him have noticed, and that is that he plays as hard as he works; and one of his amazing propensities is that if he has done a day's work which would leave most persons dead with fatigue, that evening he will be sprier than usual and ready for any fun that may be going.

Not long ago the writer had a letter from an officer serving in one of our big battleships in which the officer was speaking of the young seamen whom he had to instruct. He said, "They work hard and know a lot, and what's more *want* to know." That is the right spirit, and the officer who wrote these words is one who never praises indiscriminately, so his eulogy is worthy of being placed on record.

Ships are much, and guns and torpedoes are much,

but officers and men are far more. As Sir Francis Hastings Doyle has said :—

> "Vain mightiest fleets of armour framed,
> Vain those all-shattering guns,
> Unless proud England keep untamed
> The strong hearts of her sons."

From the days of Drake to those of the immortal Nelson, and from Nelson onwards down to the day in which we live, "the meteor flag of England," as Campbell calls it, has never lacked the right men to fight beneath the shadow that it casts. We look back on the glories that have been won for us by our dauntless forefathers, and for them we are humbly grateful; also do we hope, and our hope is one that has in it a note of serene confidence, that should those who guard the seas and the honour of England in our time be called upon, as were the seamen of old, they will prove as worthy of the confidence of their fellow-countrymen as those dead sailors who "made good" in the centuries that are past.

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